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THE NARROW WAY

A BRIEF, CLEAR, SYSTEMATICAL EXPOSITION OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE FOR THE LAITY, AND A PRACTICAL GUIDE-BOOK TO CHRISTIAN PERFECTION FOR ALL OF GOOD WILL

BY

REV. PETER GEIERMANN, C.SS.R.

Author of "Manual of Theology for the Laity," "Private Retreat for Religious," etc.

INTRODUCTION BY

VERY REV. THOMAS P. BROWN, C.SS.R.

Superior of the St. Louis Province

He will help the salvation of the righteous, and protect them that walk in simplicity (Prov. ii. 7)

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

1914

Approbation.

By virtue of the faculties granted to me by Most Rev. Patrick Murray, Superior General of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, I hereby permit the publication of the work entitled "The Narrow Way," by Rev. P. Geiermann, C.SS.R., after having had the work examined by two Theologians of our Congregation, according to our Constitutions.

THOS. P. BROWN, C.SS.R.,
Sup. Provincial.

ST. LOUIS, Feast of the Assumption, B.V.M.,
August 15, 1913

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Blessing of Pius X upon the Author

THE VATICAN, Jan. 25, 1910.

Dear Reverend Father:

His Holiness, in bestowing His Apostolic Blessing upon you and your labors, desires me to convey to you the expression of His appreciation of your zealous efforts for the salvation of souls and for the spread of the knowledge of the True Faith.

Wishing you every blessing, I am, Dear Rev. Father,

Yours faithfully in Christ,

R. CARD. MERRY DEL VAL.

REV. PETER GEIERMANN, C.SS.R.

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INTRODUCTION

KNOWLEDGE of the theory and practice of the spiritual life is essential to solid virtue. Without it the soul drifts on a sea of doubt and uncertainty, and wastes time, grace, and opportunity of merit and spiritual progress. With this knowledge an ordinary good will suffices to appreciate how sweet is the Saviour's yoke and how light His burden. Like the ladder which the patriarch Jacob saw reaching from earth to heaven the service of God becomes attractive in proportion to our knowledge and application of the teaching of holy faith.

A favorable sign of Catholic life in our day is the desire for religious information among our people. Not only are the clergy and the religious alert and anxious to use every means to qualify for their labors and to promote their spiritual welfare, but there is a growing class among the laity that relishes the higher things. While "The Narrow Way" is specially intended as a Manual of the Spiritual Life for the Laity, it will equally serve as a handbook for

postulants, novices, and seminarians that will introduce them to the principles of the spiritual life and enable them to appreciate and derive profit from larger works. May Providence use this Manual to lead many souls on the way to intimate union with a loving and merciful God.

THOS. P. BROWN, C.SS.R., Sup. Prov.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

PREFACE

"How narrow is the gate, and strait the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it" (*Matt.* vii. 14).

"The Narrow Way" is a manual of the spiritual life for all of good will. It is intended to serve as a handbook for intelligent and devout Catholics in the world and as an introduction to more comprehensive works on the spiritual life for postulants and novices in religion. To both it will give that general direction which is so essential to a life of solid virtue and which many cannot always obtain on account of the large numbers that throng around the confessionals in our large parishes.

As a brief, clear, systematic exposition of the spiritual life "The Narrow Way" presents the practical doctrine of ascetic and mystic theology in a popular form and according to a plan that makes the mysteries of grace and free will reasonable to the average mind. For the sake of clearness "The Narrow Way" is divided into two parts: the one treating of asceticism or the Interior Life, the other of mysticism or

the Supernatural Life. For the same reason each part is subdivided into sections, chapters, and articles, and so combines brevity and clearness with a systematic exposition of Catholic theory and practice.

May "The Narrow Way" help many to life eternal, and may those who find light and guidance in it recommend the author to Jesus and Mary in their prayers.

Oconomowoc, Wis.
Aug. 15, 1913.

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The Spiritual Life

The Spiritual Life is the life of a child of God. "You are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ" (*Gal.* iii. 39). As we were born to the natural life of our parents, so we were born to the spiritual life "of water and the Holy Ghost." And, as we had to pass through many stages from infancy to maturity, so must we ascend through various degrees from spiritual infancy before we can attain Christian perfection. In both instances our growth is partly due to ourselves, and partly effected by God. By our proximate disposition or immediate effort we place *the favorable condition* for God to effect our growth in the physical order by the laws of nature, and in the spiritual order by the laws of grace. We observe a normal growth in a child that is judicious in its diet, exercise, and rest, and we are convinced at the same time that meat, drink, labor, and repose do not produce physical growth but merely supply the necessary conditions for the vegetative faculties to perform their functions normally. We must

take the same view of development in the spiritual order. By judicious self-denial, prayer, and the practice of virtue, we place the condition necessary for God to develop in us a normal, spiritual growth.

The human element in the spiritual life is called *The Interior Life,* and the divine element, *The Supernatural Life.*

The Interior Life

The Interior Life is the Spiritual Life considered from a human standpoint. It is the return of the Prodigal, the submission of rebellious man to God. It consists in subjecting corrupt nature to the dominion of reason enlightened by faith, or in living in harmony and union with God. The self-conquest and conformity to the divine will, necessary to attain the perfection of the interior life, must extend not only to man's external conduct, but even to his inmost thoughts and desires, "The Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the thoughts of men" (*Prov.* xxviii. 9). By this absolute surrender of self to God man places the proximate condition necessary for grace to become the efficient cause of his sanctification.

Let us consider:

I. The Foundation of the Interior Life.
II. Dispositions for the Interior Life.
III. Self-denial or Active Purgation.

IV. The Practice of Virtue or Active Illumination.
V. Active Union with God.
VI. Development of the Interior Life in the Religious State.

PART I

THE INTERIOR LIFE

THE NARROW WAY

THE INTERIOR LIFE

SECTION I.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE INTERIOR LIFE.

I. A KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S CLAIMS ON MAN.

1. *Man Owes God Reverence.*

If reverence is the esteem and honor due to excellence, God is deserving of the highest reverence. He is the only being that exists of Himself, and is sufficient unto Himself from eternity to eternity. God is infinitely perfect, present everywhere; He sees and sustains all things. Heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool. He speaks, and the mountains melt like wax and the heavens are folded up like a scroll. His very name causes all to tremble, and every knee to bow in heaven, on earth, and in hell.

He is a triune God. From all eternity the Father knows Himself so well that His knowl-

edge assumes the personality of the Son. And the mutual love, that proceeds from the Father and the Son, completes the Blessed Trinity in the personality of the Holy Ghost. As all three persons are equally God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are equally excellent and worthy of our reverence.

The infinite goodness of God prompted His wisdom to plan and His power to create all things for His honor and glory and the welfare of His creatures. God watches over His creatures with a paternal solicitude, which Jesus compared to the tender love of a mother for her child.

2. *Man Owes God Gratitude.*

Gratitude is the obligation of giving thanks to a benefactor. God is the great benefactor of mankind. He called us into existence when He was infinitely happy, and had no need of us. He made us to His own image and likeness, though we can not thank Him adequately for the existence of a stone in the field or of a plant by the wayside. God has further put us under obligation by destining us for the joys of heaven, and by supplying us with superabundant means of earning the "reward exceeding great." Finally, when sin came into

the world, God put mankind under still greater obligation by extending to us the benefits of His mercy to that extent that He actually condemned His own Son to pay the penalty of our sins. Our divine Saviour earned our lasting gratitude by freely laying down His life for our salvation, by instituting a divine Church and seven sacraments for our sake, and by sending the Holy Ghost to guide us on the sure way to heaven.

In addition to these varied blessings to all mankind God put every one of us under additional obligation to Him by giving us life, health, talents, and opportunities, by giving us the priceless treasure of the true faith, and by continually giving us evidence of His goodness, love, and mercy. He is patient when we are wayward, prompt to help when we invoke His aid, generous in His grace, and paternal in His solicitude. If we appreciate His favors and do His holy will, He extends the special protection of His providence to us, predestines us to glory, and conducts us to eternal happiness.

3. *Man Must Fear God.*

God is the supreme lord and master, the ruler of heaven and earth. He keeps all things

in existence by that omnipotent power wherewith He created them. He is present everywhere by His immensity. He sees all things, even the most hidden thoughts of men.

Up to the present God has given us all we are and have, while the future is entirely in His keeping. He may punish us any moment if we disregard His law and offend against His divine majesty. No evil escapes the Master of life and death. If He does not punish the sinner in this life, God is eternal and can afford to wait. Sooner or later He will summon every one before His judgment by death. He will then condemn the unrepentant sinner to eternal perdition, and, at the end of the world, overwhelm him with public confusion.

Truly does St. Paul therefore say: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (*Heb.* x. 31). Hence the Saviour exhorts us to "fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (*Matt.* x. 28).

4. *Man Should Love God.*

Love is attachment to an object on account of its goodness. God is the greatest Good, and as such worthy of man's best love. This Good is limited neither by person, time, nor space.

He is self-existent, eternal by nature, and infinite in perfection. He is so excellent that no one outside of God can love Him adequately.

This infinite Good is, besides, the author of every created good. If life, health, friends, and earthly possessions are worthy of man's love, how much more should we form an attachment to God as soon as we learn that He is the eternal, uncreated Good?

God has also been very good to man by extending to him the countless blessings of creation, redemption, and sanctification. He has loved us individually with an everlasting love. He provides for us and watches over us with greater solicitude than the fondest mother ever manifested toward her child. Christ the Lord loved us to that extent that He sacrificed the last drop of His sacred blood for our sake. Wherefore St. John says: "He loved us to the end" (*John* xiii. 1). In creating us God fashioned our hearts in such a way that we necessarily love what is good. Will we then be so foolish, so ungrateful, so disobedient as not to love Him, the infinite Good? He commands us to love Him. "My son," He says, "give Me thy heart" (*Prov.* xxiii. 26). "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.

This is the greatest and first commandment" (*Matt.* xxii. 37-38).

II. KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE.

1. *The Microcosm.*

Man is the noblest creature in the visible world. He unites in himself the existence of the mineral, the life of the vegetable, and the sense of the animal kingdom, and participates in the spirit-world as well by having a soul that is made to the image and likeness of God. As a spirit the soul is naturally immortal.

The faculties of the soul correspond to man's complex nature. They are (1) the nutritive, augmentative, and reproductive faculties of vegetative life; (2) the sensitive, appetitive, and locomotive faculties of animal life; (3) the intelligence, reason, and free-will of a spiritual being.

Corresponding to the vegetative and sensitive faculties of the soul are certain members of the body called organs, by means of which these faculties operate. The sensitive faculties together with their organs are called senses. Man has five external senses by which he communicates with the outside world. They are: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Man has also

four internal senses that serve as a medium between the external senses and the intellectual faculties. They are: central sense, instinct, imagination, and memory. The central sense impresses the sensations of the external senses on the imagination and records them in the memory. The instinct apprehends what is fit and what unfit for the needs of animal life and arouses the appetitive faculties accordingly. The imagination forms images of natural impressions and stores them in the memory. The memory retains these images indefinitely.

Besides the vegetative and sensitive faculties man also has the appetitive and locomotive faculties common to all members of the animal kingdom. The appetitive faculty reaches out to enjoy, or to seek an attainable good, and to repel, or to escape from a threatening evil. It is aroused by the instinct through the imagination, or directly by the will, causes a corresponding disturbance in man's physical nature, and easily excites his intellectual faculties. A movement of the appetitive faculty is called a passion, feeling, or emotion. The passions are divided into concupiscible and irascible, according as their object is agreeable or repugnant in itself, or apprehended as subject to some condition of difficulty or danger. There are six of

the former and five of the latter. They are: love, hatred, desire, aversion, joy, and sadness; hope, despair, courage, fear, and anger. Of these eleven the passions of fear, desire, and love exercise the greatest influence in our daily lives.

The locomotive faculty is the power of moving the limbs as well as the entire body from place to place. It is set in operation and directed by the appetitive faculty, or by the power of the will.

By his spiritual powers man rises above the material world in which he lives. The intellect abstracts ideas from the impressions made on the imagination and recorded in the memory. Reason perceives and judges what is true, good, and beautiful, and commands the will to act in accordance with its decision. The will consults the reason in regard to the propriety and manner of action, controls the other faculties, and directs them in accordance with the dictates of reason, whenever it is not hampered by the passions.

2. *Life.*

Life is the activity by which a being moves itself. The soul is the principle and the faculties and organs are the means of human activity. The word "life" is often used to des-

ignate the nature, the faculty, or the vital action of a particular being. Thus we speak of the vegetative life of a plant, of the sentient life of an animal, of the rational life of man, of the intellectual life of an angel, and of the divine life of God. Life is also used to designate man's earthly pilgrimage. In this sense it is a journey to eternity. "What is life?" asks St. James. "It is a vapor which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away" (*James* iv. 15).

As man is composed of body and soul, he has a physical and a spirit life. The former is temporal and changeable, the latter immortal and immutable. The body increases, decreases, and dies, but the soul lives forever.

Besides the natural life the soul of a Christian receives a supernatural life in holy Baptism. During his earthly career man may increase, decrease, or destroy this life of grace, even as he can care for or take his physical life.

3. *Temperament.*

Temperament is the disposition resulting from the combination of man's mental and physical constitution. It is influenced by age, sex, climate, diet, occupation, environment,

state of health, education, grace, and free will.

It is said there are no two creatures exactly alike in the visible world. This is certainly true of the temperaments or dispositions of individuals. The same remark, for example, addressed to several persons, may cause one to laugh, another to weep, a third to grow angry, and make no apparent impression on a fourth.

Temperaments are usually divided into four general classes. They are the sanguine, the choleric, the melancholic, and the phlegmatic. There is no fixed boundary between them. They are rather like so many shades blending imperceptibly, though sometimes two or even more temperaments unite in the same individual. Usually, however, the characteristics of one or the other temperament predominate.

Temperaments have their good as well as their bad characteristics.

A sanguine person is naturally amiable, generous, sociable, tractable, and happy on the one hand; and frivolous, vain, flighty, distracted, roguish, wanton, and desirous of pleasure on the other.

A choleric person is open, magnanimous, generous, sagacious, and noted for force of will; but he is also inclined to be self-willed, proud,

presumptuous, obstinate, critical, ambitious, rebellious, hard-hearted, and revengeful.

A melancholic person is earnest, patient, methodical, and resigned when in good humor; but inclined to be morose, jealous, envious, irresolute, retiring, and dejected when out of sorts.

A phlegmatic person is naturally calm, patient, agreeable, and circumspect; but dull, indolent, unsympathetic, and a lover of ease, comfort, and good cheer.

4. *Delusions.*

A delusion is an erroneous judgment regarding the condition of affairs, the end to be attained, the motives to be followed, or the means to be employed in practical life. Faith teaches that the human mind has been darkened by original sin. Unless a person be very humble and circumspect, therefore, his perceptions will easily be blurred, his judgments erroneous, and the dictates of his reason reprehensible.

In consequence of delusions individuals mistake in themselves (1) the desire of virtue for virtue itself, (2) confuse passion with virtue, (3) and invariably overestimate their own ability and productions while underrating the ability and deeds of others. In consequence of

this same delusion man often (1) neglects to give God His due, (2) and even disregards the proximate occasion of sin, as though he were already confirmed in virtue.

Two causes combine to give permanence to delusions in the human mind. The first is mental pride, which is apt to dispense with salutary reflection on the tendency of human nature and on the operation of grace, and, by mistaking imagination for divine inspiration, cause "fools to rush in where angels fear to tread." The second cause of delusions is an unbridled self-love. This may blind a person to that extreme that he can not see "the beam in his own eye, though he sees the mote in his neighbor's eye" (*Matt.* vii. 3).

5. *The Predominant Passion.*

As delusions obscure and pervert the operations of the mind, so the passions hamper the will, and at times hold it captive. As a result of original sin man's will is not only weakened, but his nature inclines inordinately to one of the eleven passions. This inclination is called his predominant passion. It is inborn in him and permeates his entire temperament. The predominant passion has so great an influence on his daily life, when not directed

by a good will, that the saints called it man's greatest enemy.

Love is the root of all the passions. It is the great motive power of life. Even fear and desire spring from it. Owing to his selfish nature some form of self-love is always the foundation of man's predominant passion. He should guard against it especially because the predominant passion invariably tends to one of the seven capital sins, and so may easily pave the way for vices that will hurry him to temporal excess and eternal ruin.

6. *The Responsibility of Human Acts.*

A person is responsible for his actions to the extent that he has control or dominion over them. To exercise this dominion two things are requisite: (1) that he be conscious of the nature and effects of his actions; (2) that he perform them of his own free will. These conditions elevate an act above the mechanical and make it human, and as such deserving of reward or punishment.

Man may be impeded and even prevented from exercising dominion over an action in five ways: (1) by a lack of knowledge, through ignorance, inadvertence, or misconception of the nature and effects of an action; (2) by a

prior excitement of his passions; (3) or by a nervousness that momentarily interferes with the exercise of his reason and free will; (4) by physical violence, brought to bear on him contrary to his own will; (5) by fear, induced either from within or from without, that paralyzes his reason and will for the time being.

There are also four causes that vitiate the physical integrity of an action but do not deprive man of its dominion. They are: (1) negligence in the mind; (2) indolence in the will; (3) voluntary passion or a bad habit in the disposition; (4) laziness or impetuosity in the performance of an action.

7. *The Morality of Human Acts.*

The morality of an action is its bearing on the principles of ethics. The nature and the circumstances of an action are the source of its morality. By its nature is meant the intrinsic tendency of an action; by its circumstances those qualities of person, time, place, thing, means, method, and especially end, or intention, that clothe the act in concrete form.

In the concrete every human act is either morally good or bad. The essential morality of an act flows from its nature or object; its accidental morality from the circumstances.

8. *Good Will.*

Good will is the one great requisite to attain eternal life. Genuine good will is composed of sincerity of mind, desire of heart, and resolution of will. Sincerity is that honesty of mind which produces rectitude of intention and fidelity in action. It is diametrically opposed to that duplicity of the Pharisees, which was so severely condemned by the Saviour.

Desire is a longing of the heart for the good perceived by the mind. "What wings are to a bird," says St. Alphonsus, "desires are to a soul that longs for perfection." This desire must be efficacious, however, for the saints tell us that "hell is paved with vain desires." A desire is efficacious when the heart is anxious to make the sacrifices necessary to carry it into practice. Such a desire supplies the strength necessary for pursuit, and renders pain easier to be borne.

A resolution is a fixed determination of the will to realize the desires of the heart. When prudently formed a resolution should pause at no sacrifice, and hesitate at no legitimate means necessary to attain its end. It should turn with decision from every temptation, prudently avoid the voluntary occasions of sin, and

strengthen itself against those unavoidable by keeping itself intimately united to God. If frequently renewed and strengthened by prayer and the sacraments, one resolution thus formed for life will weary not of doing good till it attains the reward exceeding great in heaven.

9. *The Good Intention.*

The intention is that act of the mind whereby man directs his actions to a certain definite end. Man may have various immediate, but only one true final end. As he came from God he should ultimately direct all his actions to God. He may direct his actions to God as his final end in the natural, or in the supernatural order. When man directs his actions to God as his supernatural end he makes them meritorious for heaven. It suffices for this to have the habitual intention to act as a Christian.

The most perfect intention that man can have, however, is one that corresponds fully with the qualities of a good will. By living in accordance with it man directs his life to God in the most perfect manner. This intention may be formulated as follows:

"All for the honor and glory of God and the sanctification of souls."

"All out of love for Jesus and Mary."
"All according to God's holy will."

10. *The Universal Laws of Life.*

There are two universal laws of life which man must observe if he wishes to strive successfully after any definite end. They are the laws of labor and sacrifice. If he wishes to attain the reward of heaven he must, besides, observe the law of prayer.

Labor is the exerting of the powers of soul and body to attain a definite end. It is the first universal law of life. In the material world it is directed by the laws of nature. In man it should be directed by a determined will. So distinctly is the law of labor impressed on human nature that man will be discontented, and even deteriorate mentally, morally, and physically, when he strives to evade it.

On the journey of life no one can entirely escape physical pain and mental anguish, the cause of all suffering. Sacrifice, or the patient endurance in suffering is necessitated (1) by the law of labor, (2) by human misery, (3) by the battle of life. It is the second universal law of life. If man rebels, and endeavors to throw off this cross, he multiplies his suffering

and increases his burden without growing in virtue or enjoying contentment.

To persevere in the service of God amid the labors and sufferings of life requires extraordinary energy and power of endurance. To persevere in opposition to the enemies of his salvation is impossible for man without God's actual help. Though God is infinite goodness and love, He will not grant this aid unless man submits himself to His influence by prayer. Prayer, therefore, is the third universal law of a Christian life.

11. *Virtue.*

Virtue is a habit of doing moral good. A natural habit is acquired by repeated acts, but a supernatural virtue is infused by the grace of God. At the outset the will may be opposed by the defects of temperament, by the evil inclinations of passion, and even by sinful habits in the practice of virtue; but, by systematically waging war on these perverse inclinations in a Christian manner, man may gradually overcome their combined opposition and cultivate voluntary good habits, or virtues. By striving thus man contributes his part to the development of the corresponding supernatural virtue, of which grace is always the efficient cause.

A moral virtue is the golden mean between the vices of excess and defect. This mean is marked out by right reason, that is, by reason free from error, prejudice, and delusion, especially when this reason is enlightened by faith. The virtues that unite us directly to God are called theological; those that govern our actions in the way of rectitude are called moral. There are three of the former and four of the latter. The theological virtues are: faith, hope and charity. The principal moral virtues are: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. The latter are called cardinal virtues, because all other moral virtues are subordinated to them.

12. *Character.*

Both virtues and vices grow, and ripen into character. Character is the moral disposition of a person. Virtue and vice therefore determine the character. We have seen the good and the evil tendencies inborn in every temperament. We realize the moral liberty of the human will. If the will, therefore, submits as a voluntary slave to the evil tendencies of temperament, it develops a vicious character. But, if it does violence to the evil inclinations of nature and habitually strives to act according to

the dictates of reason enlightened by faith, it gradually develops a Christian character.

Five means are especially conducive to the formation of a Christian character: (1) to have the good will to avoid evil and to do good; (2) to reduce this determination to practice as circumstances require; (3) to trust in God and mistrust ourselves; (4) to be generous with God; (5) to pray earnestly for light and strength to mend natural and acquired defects.

An ideal Christian character results from the blending of the virtues of integrity, honesty, moral courage, moderation, and charity. Integrity regulates man's actions in accordance with reason enlightened by faith. Honesty makes him faithful to truth and justice. The moral courage of a Christian must be guided in all circumstances by prudence, and strengthened by divine grace. Moderation enables man to act in due season; while charity, the jewel of a Christian character, is dead to selfish motives and ever seeks the neighbor's spiritual and temporal welfare.

13. *Moral Growth.*

Moral growth consists in the development of the threefold moral good, of nature, of grace, and of merit. Man is born into this world

with some natural goodness. He is born to the supernatural life and clothed with grace in holy Baptism. By persevering good will and fidelity to grace, he eradicates the defects of temperament and passion, and Christianizes the natural good that is in him. By prayer and fidelity to his good intention he continually enlarges his capacity for grace — which God ever gives to all of good will — and grows in merit and the practice of virtue.

This growth in goodness should progress with the lapse of time, if the good will be lasting. In fact, growth in virtue is ever the infallible test of a good will. "By their fruits," said the Saviour, "you shall know them." Hence, as life is necessarily a journey ever onward, so man's moral development should correspond to his temporal progress.

As life is activity, man can not come to a deliberate moral standstill. If he does not progress, he must recede. If he does not ascend, he will descend. When our Saviour, therefore, exhorted us to be perfect, He emphasized a law that was already written in our very nature.

14. *Happiness.*

Happiness consists in enjoying the true, the

good, and the beautiful under the most favorable circumstances. As the truth, the goodness, and the beauty of virtue are most excellent, virtue becomes both the object and the measure of man's happiness. In this life three factors contribute to human happiness: (1) the subordination of man's lower nature to reason enlightened by faith; (2) the possession of physical health and of the ordinary comforts of life; (3) the favorable surroundings of friendship, especially of the friendship of God.

The circumstances of earth and time are not the most favorable for human happiness. God has, therefore, implanted in the human heart a longing for an endless possession of an infinite good which is the infinite treasure of heaven. Earth and time are given us to acquire a capacity for this enjoyment. In heaven the degree of our happiness will be proportionate to the degree of moral growth or the Christian perfection we attain in this life.

The secret, then, of true happiness is (1) to rise above our natural selves, (2) to be indifferent to all earthly and temporal things, (3) and to learn to love God with all our mind and heart and strength, because He is the eternal Truth, the infinite Good, the uncreated Beauty.

III. KNOWLEDGE OF MAN'S ENEMIES.

1. *The Flesh.*

The flesh is man's corrupt nature. As God created him man was sincere and faithful in mind, generous, constant, and fervent of will, and so devout of heart that even his sensual nature was spiritualized by it. In consequence of original sin, however, man now inclines to imprudence, ambition, and infidelity of mind, to inconstancy and sloth of will, and to selfishness of heart to so alarming a degree that his entire lower nature rebels against the dictates of his reason and the dominion of his will.

In consequence of this corruption of human nature, man inclines to make his life on earth a time of carnal indulgence and mental dissipation, instead of regarding it as a period of probation that should be employed and sanctified by labor, sacrifice, and daily prayer. In proportion as he adopts this view he loses sight of the Christian ideal, and becomes a human animal that is more influenced by the allurements of the world than by the fear and the love of God. As such he is the slave of human respect, exposes himself heedlessly to the occasions of sin, and becomes the slave of his

sensual desires. Or, if he is naturally proud, his self-love impels him to gratify his desires in striving after the honors, riches, and applause of the world. The labor and suffering that he will then cheerfully endure will be proportionate to the extent and permanence of his ambition. He may even say with Lucifer of old, "I will ascend above the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (*Osee* xiv. 13).

From this we see that the flesh is man's greatest enemy, (1) because it weighs him down to earth; (2) because it is a constant part of himself from the cradle to the grave; (3) because the world and the devil use it to lure his soul to perdition.

2. *The World.*

The world is that part of mankind which rebels against God and follows the inclinations of the flesh. The Saviour said the world had nothing in common with Him. According to the teaching of Jesus Christ (1) God is all and man nothing; (2) eternity lasting, time fleeting; (3) heaven is incomparable, earth a wilderness; (4) life is a trial, heaven the reward, and hell the punishment.

According to the false theory of the world,

(1) man is everything and has freed himself from God's dominion; (2) time is eternal and eternity a fable; (3) the honors, riches, and pleasures of life alone are worthy of man's ambition; (4) man's heaven or hell is on earth; (5) life, alas, is too short and ends in gloom; (6) we can have no knowledge of a next world. If there is a heaven God is so good that He will welcome all to it.

Christ teaches that we must give honor and glory to God; but the world has arrogated all honor and glory to itself. Christ points out man's debt of gratitude to God; the world flatters him by saying that he must thank himself for what he is and has. Christ warns man to fear Him, who can cast both body and soul into hell; the world warns him to fear the criticism and enmity of men. Christ declared that the first and greatest commandment is to love God above all things, and the next to love our neighbor as ourselves. The world says man's first duty is to get all the pleasure he can out of life, and the second never to be *caught* in a dishonorable deed.

Thus the world enslaves the thoughtless and simple by its false principles, selfish motives, and deceitful rules of conduct, and ever allures the children of God to forsake the path of vir-

tue, and enter on the broad road that leads to destruction.

3. *The Devil.*

All evil spirits constitute the third enemy of man's salvation. Moved by hatred and envy they do all in their power to bring man to perdition. Not content with using the influence of the world to turn him from the path of virtue, they exert their influence on him personally to attain their end. Though they can not influence man's mind and heart *directly,* they can inflict great harm on them through his senses and his passions.

The devil may act on man's external senses, (1) by an illusory sensation and make a corresponding impression on the imagination and memory; (2) by a corporeal apparition, as he appeared to the Saviour in the desert. He may act *directly* on man's internal senses (1) by inciting the instinct to carnal desires; (2) by effacing virtuous impressions from the imagination and memory; (3) and impressing vicious images in their stead; (4) by fixing such vicious impressions deeply upon the internal senses. In this way the devil distracts the mind of a child of God, harasses his will, and inclines his heart to sin, counteracts the past effects of grace and

virtue, blinds man to the blessings of the present, and tempts him to sin.

Ordinarily the devil is too shrewd to tempt man directly to embrace error or to act maliciously. In fact he accomplishes his end more securely by using the evil impressions of the imagination and memory and the bad example and friendship of the world to instil perverse principles in the human mind and selfish motives in the human heart, and thereby puts man at variance with God. In this way the devil does not shock man, but easily leads him to hold, that, as his influence can not be easily detected, it has been much overrated, especially in modern times.

4. *Temptation.*

A temptation is an impulse given to the will by the flesh, the world, or the devil to commit sin. The flesh tempts man in three ways: (1) by the concupiscence of the eyes to seek the riches, pleasures, and comforts of life; (2) by the concupiscence of the flesh to indulge in sensual gratifications; (3) by the pride of life to seek worldly honor, fame, and influence. The world tempts man in two ways: (1) by inspiring him with slavish fear or human respect; (2) by pandering to his passions. The

devil usually tempts man (1) by intensifying the allurements of the flesh and the world; (2) by inciting his carnal appetites to evil.

God permits man to be tempted (1) to test his good will; (2) to ground him in humility; (3) to stimulate his fervor; (4) to detach him from earthly things and center his affections on spiritual things; (5) to give his virtue a healthy growth; (6) to give him an opportunity of merit and reward; (7) to teach him to advance in the spiritual life.

5. *The Proximate Occasion of Sin.*

The proximate occasion of sin is the opportunity of committing that sin to which one is strongly tempted. Three things combine to make an occasion of sin proximate: (1) inclination, (2) temptation, (3) an opportunity. As human nature inclines universally to impurity, but not to other sins, the occasion of impurity is a universal danger, while the occasions of other sins may be dangerous for one person and not for another.

The temptation (1) is easily aroused and greatly intensified when it follows the inclination of a bad habit; (2) it is most severe when it affects man's predominant passion, or the defects of his temperament and character; (3)

in both these instances it is apt to meet with less prompt and less decisive resistance from the will.

By wilfully exposing himself to the proximate occasion of sin, or by remaining in it unnecessarily when it presents itself, man (1) withdraws himself from the influence of grace; (2) makes himself unworthy of the special protection of divine Providence; (3) and incurs the guilt of the sin by heedlessly exposing himself to it. Hence the Holy Ghost says, "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it" (*Prov.* vi. 27).

6. *Bad Will.*

As good will is indispensable for salvation, so bad will is sure to lead to reprobation. Bad will arises from insincerity of mind, fickleness of heart, and indecision of the will regarding the work of salvation.

Insincerity aims at human ends and is a slave of human respect. It serves God in prosperity, but fails in the day of adversity. Fickleness of heart prompts man to act from the impulse of passion rather than from principle. It is willing to say, "Lord! Lord!" but not to labor and suffer to break the fetters of sin, and so never really desires to lay up treasures in

heaven. Indecision of will disqualifies man for the resolute, persevering endeavor of a true child of God. It makes man a slave of circumstance, and permits him to drift into sin and vice without being seriously tempted by the enemies of his soul.

7. *Vice.*

A vice is a habit of sin. It results from a misuse of man's free will. It will grow out of his evil inclinations if he does not oppose it resolutely by acquiring the opposite virtue.

As virtue is the golden mean, vice is ordinarily found at either extreme of every virtue. There are seven vices, however, which are the source of many others. They are pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth, and are usually called capital sins.

The majority of mankind are actuated more by instinct and passion in daily life than by reason. They find it difficult to restrain their animal propensities and easily become the slave of avarice, lust, gluttony, intemperance, and sloth. Those on the other hand who try to govern their daily lives according to the dictates of reason find it more difficult to regulate their ambition. They easily permit their inordinate self-love to exaggerate their excellence and puff

them up with pride. In consequence they easily become vain and inordinately desirous of the honors of life. Christians can best master their ambition by converting it into zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of souls. They can easily do this, after they are thoroughly converted themselves, by generously promoting the works of zeal and mercy that are established in their community.

8. *Remorse of Conscience.*

Remorse of conscience is that sadness of heart which all suffer who act contrary to the dictates of their conscience. It is a self-reproach and condemnation for having done wrong. When man seeks his happiness in the honors, riches, or pleasures of life, his conscience becomes his first accuser. In proportion to the magnitude and number of his sins will his conscience torment him by day and by night, reminding him of his offense and of the punishment it deserves.

During life man may smother the voice of conscience by plunging still deeper into vice and dissipation. At the hour of death, however, his remorse will be intensified by contemplating the emptiness of his life and the terrors of the approaching judgment.

This remorse of conscience will be the greatest torment of the reprobate in hell. The Saviour calls it "their worm that dieth not" (*Mark* ix. 43). Like a worm gnawing at their heart, it will continually remind them (1) that it was so easy for them to save their souls; (2) that they lost the "reward exceeding great" through their own fault; (3) that they did this for the vanities of this fleeting life. Thus their outraged consciences will obtain justice by tormenting them for ever and ever.

IV. KNOWLEDGE OF MAN'S EXISTENCE.

1. *Time.*

Time is the measure of duration. Time began when "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," and it will terminate with the renovation of the world on the Last Day. In regard to man's existence time may be considered in three ways: (1) in the strict sense, as the measure of man's earthly pilgrimage; (2) in a wide sense, as the span of human life; (3) and as man's probation period for eternity.

As a measure of duration time is a momentary quality of life that is unceasing in its progress, passes quickly, and never returns.

Strictly speaking only the present moment is time. It connects the eternity of the past with the eternity to come. The activity of the present ceases as soon as it is recorded in the history of the past. The mistakes of the past may be remedied in the present, but vain schemes about the future are a double loss, because they squander the present and build on an uncertain future. Whether man seizes the present opportunity, or permits it to glide idly by, the stream of time moves on unceasingly. As the present moment alone is his, it would be the height of folly to indulge in useless regrets about the past or entertain visionary plans about the future.

As the span of human life, time is like a rainbow with one end resting in the cradle of the obscure past, and the other projecting into the more uncertain grave of the future. Man's span of life is like a rainbow (1) because the duration of both is brief and uncertain; (2) because both develop their luster in the present; (3) because both may be obscured and destroyed by any trivial cause.

The priceless value of the present moment is evident when we consider time in relation to man's final destiny. One moment sanctified by the tears of repentant love will unlock the

gates of heaven to the greatest sinner. Every moment spent in God's service will be a precious jewel in man's diadem of glory. But even a single moment spent in sin may rob the longest life of its treasures of grace and merit. This is indeed food for serious thought! and yet the most serious thought on time is this: "the moment most precious because decisive, and most terrible because uncertain, is the moment that ushers the soul before the judgment seat of God."

2. *Eternity.*

Eternity is the total and perfect possession of an interminable life. As time is the measure of change, so eternity is the measure of permanency. Though this permanency belongs primarily to God, it applies also to the immortality of angels and men. Eternity may be considered: (1) in itself, (2) as a peculiarity of the happiness of heaven, (3) and as a quality of the pains of hell.

Eternity is called "the possession of interminable life" to emphasize its inalienable immutability and permanence of activity. It is called "total possession" because it combines variety and intensity of activity in the permanence of its action. It is finally called "per-

fect possession" because this varied and intense activity is secure and complete. In this life man may concentrate all his energy on the exercise of one faculty, and that only for a time. In the next life, however, he will permanently exercise every faculty in the highest degree for endless ages.

In heaven "eternal rest" emphasizes the security of happiness in this permanence of life. There the human mind will see God face to face, recognizing Him as the one necessary Being, the infinite Truth, the only real Good, and the perfect Beauty. In God man will contemplate the wonder and harmony of His works, and the love, mercy, and justice of His dealings with His creatures. At the same time the human heart will overflow in an ecstasy of delight in the possession of the infinite Good and Beauty, while every other faculty will enjoy the pleasure and security of this interminable life. The pleasures of the elect will be further enhanced by the friendship of all the children of God in the mansions prepared for them from the beginning of the world.

In hell, however, "eternal misery" is stamped on the interminable life of the reprobate. There the mind will brood over the vast misfortune of losing God and heaven for-

ever. The heart will there drain the cup of this misfortune and acknowledge this loss to be the final consequence of its own fault. Like Dives, the reprobate see the happiness of the blessed, and are consumed with remorse and despair because it will ever be beyond their reach. Here the soul that refused to serve God on earth becomes the slave of the devil; here the soul that abused the liberty of a child of God pines in the dungeon of hell; here the soul that was the willing slave of the flesh is permeated by "the fire that dieth not" (*Mark* ix. 42).

As the blessed enjoy the variety and intensity of the happiness of heaven according to their merit, so the reprobate will endure the variety and intensity of the pains of hell according to the measure of their sin. Both are immutable and permanent in the total and perfect possession of their interminable life.

SECTION II.

DISPOSITIONS FOR THE INTERIOR LIFE.

In the Parable of the Sower Jesus tells us that the seed of God's word yields a return proportionate to the quality of the soil, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some only thirty-fold. As the quality of the soil is determined by man's dispositions in the service of God, it rests with him whether his heart will be soil by the wayside, stony soil, soil overgrown with thorns, or good soil of an inferior, of a medium, or of a superior grade. There are especially four qualities that dispose us to bring forth fruit a hundred-fold. They are: Diffidence in Ourselves, Confidence in God, Submission to God's Representatives, and Determination to attain Perfection.

I. DIFFIDENCE IN OURSELVES.

1. *We Are Nothing of Ourselves.*

We are not only dependent on almighty God, but whatever we are in body and soul, in mind

and heart—with the exception of sin—is a gift of God. Even virtue and merit is the effect of His grace. Hence we must say with St. Paul, "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 *Cor.* xv. 10).

2. *We Can Do Nothing of Ourselves.*

The same power which created us keeps us in existence. The same God, who implanted a universal desire for happiness in mankind, gives every individual the free will to choose the particular means to attain this happiness. But, if in the natural order man can not act without God's assistance, how much less can he acquire the treasures of grace and merit independently of God? No wonder the Saviour said: "I am the vine; you are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing" (*John* xv. 5).

3. *Our Nature is Corrupted by Sin.*

The helplessness of human nature is intensified by the consequences of sin. In the parable of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among the robbers the Saviour gives us a picture of human nature corrupted by original sin. This sin of Adam robbed man-

kind of original justice and holiness, darkened the mind, weakened the will, and inclined human nature to evil. "By one man sin entered into the world," says St. Paul, "and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" (*Rom.* v. 12).

In addition to this corruption of human nature we individually suffer the consequence of our personal sins and bad habits. As these are truly the fetters of hell, we may all lament with King David; "I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me" (*Ps.* l. 5).

4. *Heaven Is Beyond Our Unaided Reach.*

Heaven is so completely beyond our unaided reach that we could not even imagine the supernatural order without a direct revelation from God. Much less could we, relying on our unaided strength, hope to attain the perfection and the reward of children of God. Our only hope of heaven is in Him who said to Abraham of old: "Fear not, I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great" (*Gen.* xv. 1).

5. *The Enemies of Our Salvation Are Powerful.*

The flesh, the world, and the devil conspire against our salvation. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit" (*Gal.* v. 17). "The

friendship of this world is the enemy of God" (*James* iv. 4). "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (1 *Peter* v. 8). Our only hope of victory is in God. Only when we watch and pray that we enter not into temptation may we confidently say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (*Phil.* iv. 13).

II. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

1. *On Account of God's Goodness, Love, and Mercy.*

How marvelous are the evidences of God's goodness, love, and mercy? When He had no need of his services, God made man to His own image and likeness, destined him for the Beatific Vision, and endowed him with superabundant means of working out his exalted destiny. When sin closed heaven to man and made him a slave of Satan, God was so lavish in His mercy that He did not hesitate to sacrifice His only begotten Son for man's redemption. And He solemnly assures us that He loves every one of us with an everlasting love and watches over us with a greater solicitude than the fondest mother bestows upon her infant child.

2. *On Account of God's Promises.*

So urgent are God's invitations to place our trust in Him, and so solemn His promises to help us, that no one can reasonably refuse Him his confidence. A few quotations will suffice. "Behold," He says, "I stand at the gate and knock" (*Apoc.* iii. 20). "Come to Me, all you that labor, and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (*Matt.* xi. 28). "Turn ye to Me, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will turn to you" (*Zach.* i. 3). "As I live, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (*Ezech.* xxxiii. 11). "I am weary of entreating thee" (*Jer.* xv. 6). "If the wicked do penance and keep My commandments, I will not remember his iniquities" (*Ezech.* xviii. 21).

3. *On Account of the Merits of Jesus Christ.*

Jesus is both God and man. As God His actions have infinite value; in His human nature He paid the price of our redemption. One prayer, one tear, one drop of His blood would have made adequate atonement for the sins of the world. But this did not satisfy the burning love of Jesus. To manifest His love, and to constrain us to love Him in return, He

shed the last drop of His precious blood in our behalf. Hence St. John Chrysostom calls his crucified Master "the hope of Christians, the staff of the lame, the comfort of the poor, the destruction of the proud, the victory over the devil, the guide of youth, the rudder of sailors, the refuge of those who are in danger, the counsellor of the just, the rest of the afflicted, the physician of the sick, and the glory of martyrs."

4. *On Account of the Protection of the Blessed Virgin.*

Mary loves all mankind with a mother's love. She gave us the Saviour, and so has a double interest in every one of us. When she offered the divine Infant in the temple she consented to the decree of the heavenly Father condemning Him to die that we might live. This sacrifice Mary consummated beneath the cross of her dying Son, where she became the Mother of Sorrows. If Mary made this sacrifice to give us spiritual life, she certainly will do all in her power to foster it. And her influence is all-powerful with that God of goodness who made her a worthy mother for His divine Son.

5. *On Account of the Mission of the Catholic Church.*

Jesus Christ established the Catholic Church to bring peace on earth to all of good will. Guided by the Holy Ghost she brings peace to honest minds by teaching them the truths of religion with divine certainty. She brings peace to the human heart by reconciling the repentant sinner with God, and by making the just taste how good God is to those who love and serve Him. And she assures her children of abiding peace by offering them the means of perseverance amid the trials of life, and the divine assurance of endless bliss.

6. *On Account of the Power of Prayer.*

Prayer is the key to the infinite treasures of God's mercy and the boundless merits of Jesus Christ. Behold the testimony of Sacred Scripture; "Call upon Me, and I will deliver thee" (*Jer.* xxxiii. 3). "Ask and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you" (*Matt.* vii. 7). "You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (*John* xv. 7). "If you shall ask Me anything in My name, that I will do" (*John* xiv. 14). "Amen, amen, I say to

you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you" (*John* xvi. 23).

7. *On Account of the Intercession of the Angels and Saints.*

"The continual prayer of a just man availeth much" (*James* v. 16). If the prayer of Abraham, of Moses, and of other holy men and women had great influence with God while they were on earth, how much more influence must the angels and saints have before the throne of God? God Himself has appointed His angels our guardians, and His Church has placed us under the special protection of the saints. Hence, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, it is evidently the plan of God, that we be brought to Him through the influence of those who surround His throne, and that the more perfect members of Christ's mystical body aid the imperfect members to increase in charity and thus become more and more godlike.

III. SUBMISSION TO GOD'S REPRESENTATIVES.

1. *Loyalty to Jesus Christ.*

All our hope is in our Mediator Jesus Christ. "The Father hath given all things into His

hands" (*John* iii. 35). He ransomed us at a great price. To Him we swore allegiance in holy Baptism. He is "the way, the truth and the life" (*John* xiv. 6). No one can go to the Father except through Him. He is the judge of the living and the dead, the conqueror of hell, and the bestower of the crown of life. As His mystical members we should make the interest of Jesus Christ our own. Loyalty to Him should prompt us to further the glory of God and the welfare of souls. Loyalty to Him should prompt us to copy Him in our daily lives, until, with St. Paul, we glory only in the cross of Jesus Christ.

2. *Loyalty to the Catholic Church.*

To His Church Jesus Christ said, "As the Father hath sent Me I also send you" (*John* xx. 21). The loyalty, then, which we owe to the Saviour, we owe likewise to His Church. Or rather, as fraternal charity is the test of our love for God, so loyalty to the Catholic Church is the evidence of our loyalty to Jesus Christ. In the desolation of Gethsemani Jesus looked in vain for sympathy from His disciples. In the conflicts with her enemies shall holy Church look in vain for sympathy from her children? Shall she be forced to complain as God

did of old; "I have brought up children, and exalted them; but they have despised me?" (*Is.* i. 2.) If we are to be loyal members of the Catholic Church, we must enter readily into the views of our Holy Father, of our bishops and pastors, rejoice with them in their success, sympathize with them in their trials, and do all we can by prayer and good works to aid them in extending the reign of Christ in the hearts of men.

3. *Respect for Lawful Authority.*

As "there is no power but from God" (*Rom.* xiii. 1), respect for authority must be a characteristic of every loyal Catholic. By inculcating obedience to the various established forms of government in the world, the Catholic Church is a pillar of support alike to kingdoms and republics, while at the same time she champions the rights of every member of society, by condemning an abuse of authority as tyranny. In like manner the Church safeguards the permanence of the home by defending the rights of parents over their children, and the obligation of all, but especially of the children, to respect the sacred rights of parents in the home.

4. *Obedience to Our Spiritual Director.*

Pride and self-love easily deceive us on the journey of life. To protect us against this self-deception Jesus Christ has given us the priests of His Church as the official interpreters of His law, and the divine directors of our consciences. To them He said: "He that heareth you, heareth Me" (*Luke* ix. 16). Because the blind can not lead the blind, the Catholic Church requires her priests to prepare by years of study and prayer to assume the responsibilities of their office. An humble and docile soul that submits in a spirit of faith to the guidance of her spiritual director enjoys the greatest peace and security. A proud and selfish spirit, on the other hand, that desires the evidence of sense or reason instead of the teaching of faith, will seek in vain for peace of mind or heart as long as she refuses to submit to the guidance of Christ's representative.

IV. DETERMINATION TO ATTAIN PERFECTION.

Perfection is the absolute and complete attainment of man's final end or destiny. As a characteristic of a holy life on earth, however,

perfection essentially consists in the love and friendship of God. There are three degrees or stages of this love. In the first man does as much good as is necessary to avoid offending God by mortal sin. In the second he goes farther and avoids deliberate venial sin. In the third stage he is so intimately united to God by the bond of divine charity that he corrects his natural defects and does the will of God in all things.

The general means whereby man grows in the love and friendship of God and advances on the way to perfection are: (1) self-denial, or the subjugation of himself to the influence of grace; (2) the practice of virtue; (3) and conformity to the divine will.

The heavenly Father, being infinitely perfect, is the standard of all perfection. As the image and likeness of God, man's life-task is to reproduce in himself the divine perfections according to his capacity. Hence the Saviour said: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (*Matt.* v. 48).

Man starts on the way to perfection as soon as he strives to know, love, and serve God. On the way he has Jesus for his model, Mary for his mother, the Church for his teacher, the Holy Ghost for his counselor, the priest of God for

his director, the angels and saints for his friends, and prayer, the sacraments, and the sacramentals as the means of obtaining divine strength.

To progress securely on the way to perfection, man must advance gradually along the three stages, and be actuated by the determination not to relax until he has entered the kingdom of heaven.

1. *The Christian Ideal.*

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (*Matt.* iii. 17). Jesus Christ is the divine Model proposed for our imitation. His ambition was the glory of God and the welfare of souls; His strength, the love of God and of mankind; His daily bread, the will of His heavenly Father. He abhorred sin and triumphed over every weakness. He was the uncompromising enemy of the world and the conqueror of the powers of hell.

In us "the flesh lusteth against the spirit," while the world and the devil use even our friends to allure us to a life of self-indulgence. And yet "Time is short," "Life shall pass as the trace of a cloud," "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment," "What things a man shall sow, those also he

shall reap," "These shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just into life everlasting."

We cannot escape from almighty God; neither can we turn back to nothingness. We must go onward, either on the broad road that leads to perdition, or on the narrow way that leads to life everlasting.

If we constantly aim at the Christian ideal and strive to reproduce it in our lives, Jesus assures us that His yoke is sweet and His burden light. Trusting in Him, therefore, both for the grace to will and to do, we may confidently say with St. Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 *Tim.* i. 12).

2. *Horror for Sin.*

Sin is a revolt, an act of the basest contempt and the vilest ingratitude towards the God of infinite majesty and goodness; an act which renews the cause of the death of Jesus Christ. Sin robs man of the blessings of grace and of the treasures of merit and virtue. It turns him from the pursuit of happiness and plunges him into misery. From a child of God and an heir to the kingdom of heaven it degrades him into

a slave of Satan, and condemns him to the punishment of hell.

The first step, therefore, in the pursuit of the Christian ideal is a horror for sin and its consequences, founded on the abiding conviction that sin is the greatest evil in the world. An abiding horror for sin thus impels man to negative perfection, (1) by guarding him against sinful temptations and occasions; (2) by prompting him to avoid every deliberate sinful action; (3) and, finally, by spurring him on to do penance for his past sins.

3. *A Spirit of Reflection.*

"With desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in the heart" (*Jer.* xii. 11). In these words the prophet tells us why his people were steeped in ignorance and vice. There was "none that considereth in the heart." We consider in the heart by a spirit of reflection, by meditating on the eternal truths, and applying them honestly to ourselves.

No matter how fascinating the Christian ideal, or how shocking the malice and consequences of sin, the former will not attract us, nor the latter repel us unless we keep them

vividly before our minds. Hence the older spiritual writers emphasized the necessity of mental prayer at stated times. If the stress and confusion of modern life will not permit us to set aside certain hours of the day for serious reflection, we must, to ensure our salvation, make up for this misfortune by cultivating a spirit of closer recollection and prayer in the performance of our routine duties. For, unless we keep the Christian ideal and the evil of sin vividly before our minds, they will gradually fade away, and, in proportion as they do, will they be replaced by worldly-mindedness and selfishness of heart. As the attitude of the mind engenders the desires of the heart and the resolution of the will, and dictates our rule of conduct, a spirit of reflection is the first requisite on the narrow way.

4. *A Spirit of Compunction.*

The habitual grief of the soul arising from a constant remembrance of our own sinfulness is called a spirit of compunction. It arises from concentrating our horror of sin in general on our own sins in particular. This reflection makes us realize our guilt and the punishment our sins deserve. The disposition which results is called a spirit of compunction because

it pierces our hearts with a detestation and hatred of our sins, and prompts us to exclaim in the words of Jeremias: "The mercies of the Lord that we were not consumed" (*Lam.* iii. 22).

The spirit of compunction prompts us to do violence to ourselves for the kingdom of heaven, and to despise the world and the powers of darkness. It grounds us in humility and the fear of the Lord, and spurs us on to serve God ever with greater generosity and stronger fidelity.

5. *Subjugation of the Flesh.*

Before sin came into the world man's lower nature was under the control of his reason. Now "the flesh lusteth against the spirit" and "he that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption" (*Gal.* vi. 8). By the subjugation of the flesh we therefore mean the bringing of our animal cravings under the dominion of reason. To effect this subjugation of the flesh we must (1) compel it to do penance for its rebellion; (2) mortify the senses and passions to bring them into subjection; (3) and pray earnestly for light to see ourselves as God sees us, and for grace to triumph in this lifelong conflict.

6. *Subjugation of the Spirit.*

"Where pride is, there also shall be reproach: but where humility is, there also is wisdom" (*Prov.* xi. 2). Pride is the beginning of all sin, humility the bed-rock on which our spiritual edifice must rest. Pride is an exaggerated idea of our excellence, humility the realization of the truth that we are nothing of ourselves but sin. Pride prompts us to be "like unto God" and to assert our independence; humility prompts us to live in grateful subjection to God, on whom we entirely depend.

By the subjugation of the spirit we therefore mean (1) the discarding of the groundless pretensions of pride; (2) and habituating ourselves to conform to truth and justice, especially as proposed to us by the teaching of faith.

7. *Contempt of the World.*

As followers of Jesus Christ we must despise and hate the world. We must despise its false principles and maxims, its selfish motives and hypocritical rules of conduct. We must hate its seductive honors and allurements, and scorn its tyrannical assumptions and implacable enmity.

The world hates the truth, and rewards its

slaves with temporal and eternal misery. Contempt of the world is, therefore, both an evidence and an effect of a practical faith. The light of faith alone enables us to understand the false assumptions and the pernicious influence of the world, and to triumph over it and the weakness of human respect. Hence St. John says: "Whatever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (*John* v. 4).

8. *Contempt of Satan.*

Since Mary crushed the serpent's head, and Jesus triumphed over the powers of hell, Satan has become as a chained dog or as a caged beast. As long as we (1) fear and tremble at the thought of our own weakness, (2) watch and pray lest we fall into temptation, (3) and call on Jesus and Mary in time of temptation, we enjoy the special protection of divine Providence, and may safely despise all the powers of hell. In fact, an excessive fear of the power of Satan springs as much from a want of confidence in God, as a false security against the powers of darkness is an evidence of a want of practical faith. In the temptation in the desert Jesus was, humanly speaking, taken at a disadvantage by the devil. And yet He did not

give way to fear when tempted, but calmly said: "Begone, Satan: for it is written, the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve" (*Matt.* iv. 10).

9. *A Spirit of Prayer.*

To take up our daily cross and follow the Master we need the help of God at every step. By our daily prayers and frequentation of the sacraments we ordinarily do not submit ourselves sufficiently to the influence of grace to progress with the full liberty of children of God. For this a spirit of prayer is necessary. Three pious practices combine to form a spirit of prayer: (1) the habit of recollection, or living in the presence of God; (2) the habit of devotion, or inclining to God with childlike confidence; (3) the habit of ejaculatory prayer and interior communion with God.

10. *Sincerity.*

Sincerity is that attitude of our mind which, being free from ignorance or bias, enables us to grasp the excellence of the Christian ideal, and begets the desire and the resolution to attain it. It results from a serious reflection on the teaching of faith, united with heartfelt prayer. Sincerity enables us to view life from the true,

eternal, immutable standpoint of almighty God. It manifests itself in that single-mindedness of purpose which subordinates all things to "the one thing necessary" and renders us indifferent to all that is not subservient to this end. It was this sincere apprehension of the relative value of temporal and eternal things that made St. Paul exclaim: "I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ" (*Phil.* iii. 8).

11. *Desire.*

The desire of perfection is a longing to please God and to make the necessary sacrifices to do His holy will in all things. "Holy desires are the blessed wings," says St. Alphonsus, "on which the saints fly to the mountain of perfection." As the heart necessarily desires whatever the mind apprehends as excellent and attainable, the ardor of our desires will naturally grow or diminish in proportion as we grasp the importance of spiritual things or permit them to fade from our minds. Holy desires inspire us (1) with the courage to enter resolutely on the narrow way, (2) with the strength to surmount all obstacles, (3) with the forti-

tude to face the temptations and trials of life. To inspire us with these desires it is specially useful, besides meditating on the eternal truths and the life of our blessed Saviour, to study the lives of those saints who at one time had been great sinners, or who lived and sanctified themselves in our own circumstances. Such examples will prompt us to say with St. Augustine: "These have done it, those have done it; why then can not I?"

12. *Resolution.*

In the spiritual life a resolution is a determination to please God. We should make the resolution to belong entirely to God and to please Him in all things. "God looks for only one resolution on our part," truly remarks St. Teresa, "and He will do the rest Himself." By this resolution, firmly and irrevocably made and continually applied to the circumstances of our daily lives, we are made fit material, like clay in the potter's hands, to be transformed by God into vessels of election.

According to St. Alphonsus this resolution includes the determination (1) to avoid every deliberate fault; (2) to detach ourselves from earthly things; (3) to be faithful in prayer and mortification; (4) to keep the eternal truths

and the passion of Jesus Christ before our minds; (5) to resign ourselves to the will of God in adversities; (6) to beg of God continually the gift of His holy love; (7) to do what seems most pleasing to God; (8) to carry this resolution into effect in the present.

The three general motives which prompt us to form and keep this resolution are the fear of hell, the desire of heaven, and the love of God.

13. *Generosity.*

Generosity is "wholesouledness" in the service of God. The generous Christian knows his limitations as well as the timid and the lukewarm, but, serving God through love, he joyfully does what he can, and confidently relies on the assistance and guidance of heaven. With St. Paul he not only says, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me," but is also, like him, willing to endure all things that God ordains. Generosity is begotten by the fear of the Lord, stimulated by the hope of reward, and perfected by the love of God. It makes us detest the faults of the past, rejoice in the good we have done, utilize the present moment faithfully, and desire to do great things to testify our love and devotion. Generosity makes us seek opportunities of doing good, seize them with

avidity, and produce a perfect work. It was the generosity of St. Paul that prompted him to be anathema from Christ for the conversion of his brethren (*Rom.* ix. 3).

14. *Fervor.*

Fervor is affection in the service of God. What generosity is in disposition that fervor is in action. St. Basil calls fervor an efficacious desire of pleasing God in all things. When a good will has blossomed into holy desires and matured into a practical resolution, it stimulates the affections of a generous soul and makes them glow with fervor.

Fervor manifests itself (1) by the rigor of our penance and mortification; (2) by our recollection and devotion in prayer; (3) by our zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls; (4) and by our love of humiliation and the cross.

Fervor imparts that facility and sweetness to the service of God which accelerates and insures our progress in perfection.

15. *Docility.*

Docility is submissiveness to the will of God, whether made known by His law, through the voice of our superior, or by the inspiration of

grace. It manifests itself in the respect we have for authority, in the reverence we have for our superiors, and in the readiness with which we welcome the inspirations of grace. Young Samuel had this spirit of docility when he said: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth" (1 *Kings* iii. 10). King David also gave us an example of it when he prayed: "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God" (*Ps.* cxlii. 10).

V. STRIVING AFTER PERFECTION.

1. *Promptitude.*

Promptitude in the service of God is eagerness to please Him. It flows from a spirit of docility animated by the love of God, and manifests itself (1) in the exactness with which we perform the duties of our state in life; (2) in the willingness with which we carry our cross; (3) and in the alacrity, cheerfulness, and thoroughness with which we strive to please God in all things. It induces us to concentrate our energies on the task before us, and to accomplish much under disadvantages and in a short time.

2. *Continuous Effort.*

By a continuous effort in the service of God we mean that our efforts should never relax till

our earthly pilgrimage is ended. The very nature of our earthly trial demands this uninterrupted endeavor on our part. Now time, grace, and opportunity are given us. If we employ them in God's service we progress; if we neglect to use them we recede. In this life there is no stopping place, no time when we are exempt from doing God's holy will. Eternal rest awaits us in heaven. If, then, we neglect to co-operate even with a single grace, that neglect may break the chain of graces that leads to final perseverance, and so may be the first step to our final reprobation.

3. *Gradual Progress.*

The spiritual life is composed of a divine and a human element. The divine element is the grace of God; the human, our fallen nature actuated by good will. Both elements combine to effect the spiritual life within us, the human element supplying the material or favorable condition, while the grace of God is the efficient cause of our sanctification. The human element progresses by self-denial and patient endurance of the cross in imitation of the Master; the divine, by an infusion of additional grace.

As the human element progresses by being more and more subjected to the influence of

grace, its progress is usually slow and necessarily gradual, though always proportionate to the violence we do to ourselves. The progress of the divine element, or the influence of grace, when not miraculous, is also gradual, because proportionate to the capacity of the human element. God is indeed lavish, but not reckless, with His grace. He gives the increase in proportion to our fidelity in co-operating with it, or in proportion as we increase our capacity for grace by the gradual surrender of ourselves through conformity to His holy will.

4. *Patience.*

Patience is that self-possession which enables us to conform to the will of God in the trials of life. The trials of life arise (1) from the nature of our earthly pilgrimage; (2) from the infirmity of human nature; (3) from the conduct of others; (4) from the influence of the spirit-world; (5) and from the special dispensations of divine Providence.

Patience (1) makes us masters of ourselves and our surroundings; (2) makes us Christlike in our love of the cross; (3) makes us the beloved children of God; (4) entitles us to the reward of heaven; (5) and gives that "peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding"

(*Phil.* iv. 7). To possess our souls in patience St. Alphonsus exhorts us (1) to anticipate the trials that await us; (2) to pray for strength to endure them; (3) to frequent the sacraments; (4) to live in intimate union with God.

5. *Decision in Temptation.*

Decision in temptation is vigor and promptitude in resisting the inclinations to sin. Our will may act with this decision even when our nature is rebellious and hankers for what is forbidden. And, practically, the greater the effort necessary to triumph over a temptation, the greater is also the victory and the merit.

As every temptation puts our loyalty to Jesus Christ to the test, we should be more concerned about our decision than about the nature of the temptation which may assail us. Our hope of triumph is in the goodness and promises of God, but the grace of God can not crown us with victory before we have stood the test of resisting the temptation with decision.

To maintain this decision and conquer every temptation we must (1) habitually despise the flesh, the world, and the devil; (2) be constant in prayer and the frequentation of the sacraments; (3) make devout use of blessed articles; (4) and occasionally reveal our severer tempta-

tions to our director. Most temptations are easily overcome by making contrary acts in a spirit of faith. The saints of God advise us, however, to turn away from temptations against faith and holy purity, and conquer them by invoking the aid of Jesus and Mary while occupying our minds with other subjects. The reason for this salutary advice is because temptations against faith and holy purity are intensified by actual opposition. "I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief" (*Mark* ix. 23). "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it; I went to the Lord and besought Him" (*Wis.* viii. 21).

6. *Avoidance of the Occasion of Sin.*

The occasion of sin is something external to us, which allures us to sin. For one it is association with a certain person, for another the reading of a certain book, for a third the frequentation of a certain place. Again, some occasions are dangerous to faith, others to modesty, to temperance, to justice, or to charity.

By the law of self-preservation we are bound to avoid the proximate occasion of sin. When this is impossible we must render its danger, or allurement, remote by special vigilance and prayer. For the Holy Ghost says: "He that

loveth the danger shall perish in it," and "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (*Ecclus.* iii. 27; ix. 1).

As long as we (1) avoid the proximate occasion of sin when we can; (2) render the occasion remote where it is impossible to avoid it; (3) renew our determination to avoid every sin; (4) and fortify ourselves by prayer, we have a claim on the special protection of Providence, and may rest assured that God will deliver us. But, to seek the occasion of sin, or tarry voluntarily in it, besides incurring the guilt of the sin, is an act of presumption in which Samson, the strongest, and Solomon, the wisest, of men, succumbed.

7. *Search for the Occasion of Doing Good.*

An occasion of doing good is an opportunity of pleasing God. All are given the opportunity of fulfilling the duties of their state in life, as well as the opportunity of performing various acts of fraternal charity and Christian mercy. Our first aim should be to perform the duties of our state in life conscientiously, and then to seek those occasions of doing good (1) which harmonize with our calling; (2) which are most urgent; (3) which are nearest at hand. It is

better to seek the ordinary occasions of doing good rather than the extraordinary, and to prefer the hidden ones to those which earn for us the applause of the world.

8. *Sadness and Cheerfulness.*

Sadness is a depression of heart which tends to exaggerate our troubles, to paralyze our energies, and to make us rebel at the trials of life. It may be caused (1) by physical infirmity, (2) by nervous strain, (3) by a sulky mood of our wounded pride or self-love, (4) by the weight of the burdens of life, (5) by remorse of conscience, (6) by the circumsession of an evil spirit, (7) by an extraordinary visitation of Providence.

Cheerfulness, on the other hand, is a buoyancy of spirit which inclines us to look on the bright side of things, fills us with enthusiasm, and enables us to bear the burdens of life with ease and pleasure. It may be caused (1) by the glow of health, (2) by the gratification of our pride or self-love, (3) by congenial occupation or surroundings, (4) by the peace of a good conscience, (5) by sensible fervor, (6) by the alluring influence of grace.

We can repress tendencies to sadness and cul-

tivate cheerfulness by resigning ourselves unreservedly to the dispensations of Providence, and by seeking to please God alone in all things.

9. *Attention to Details.*

Attention to details is essential to produce a perfect work. Our daily life is made up mostly of minor obligations and petty trials. Heroic sacrifices are rarely required in a lifetime. Though the main duties of our calling demand our first attention, the details are also of obligation. By performing these with due attention, we also fulfil the former well and thus bring forth fruit a hundred-fold. Continual attention to details in shunning evil and doing good is not only the greatest evidence of our loyalty to God, but also the evidence of virtue as heroic as is found in the lives of the canonized saints.

10. *Good Use of the Present Moment.*

The present moment links the eternity of the past with the eternity to come. The past will never return; the future is in God's keeping. The present is the time of grace and opportunity. If we concentrate our energies on the present moment, our labor will be easy because sustained by grace, and our burden light because proportioned to our strength.

The present moment is so precious that St. Augustine calls it "a drop from the ocean of eternity." When used well it accumulates treasures for us in heaven, but when neglected or misspent it will be evidence of our guilt for the day of wrath.

11. *Frequent Renewal of Our Good Intention.*

As the hand of the compass turns to the North so human nature instinctively inclines to earthly things. To concentrate our energies on spiritual things we must counteract the downward tendency of our corrupt nature by a frequent renewal of our good intention. No matter how clear our perception of the Christian ideal, how complete the conquest over our enemies, how sincere our intention, how ardent our desires, and how determined our resolution, if we do not recollect ourselves and renew our intention from time to time, our fervor will cool, our generosity will decrease, and our vigilance will relax. In this lamentable condition we not only squander time and grace and commit many faults, but are apt to succumb to any serious temptation. On this account all Christians are exhorted to renew their good intention at least every morning. St. Alphonsus exhorts us to make a good intention at the beginning of

every undertaking, to renew it when the clock strikes, and to make it efficacious by the practice of ejaculatory prayer and the occasional recitation of a Hail Mary. At least let us accustom ourselves to repeat as often as we think of God, "All for the glory of God and the good of souls. All out of love for Jesus and Mary. All according to God's holy will."

12. *Fidelity.*

Fidelity in the service of God is a persevering effort to avoid evil and do good. It is essential to attain eternal happiness. "Be thou faithful until death," says our Saviour, "and I will give thee the crown of life" (*Apoc.* ii. 10).

"To begin well," says St. Teresa, "is half the victory, but to receive the crown of glory we must die a holy death." It matters little when or where we shall die as long as we keep ourselves in readiness by fidelity in God's service. "Wherefore be you ready," exhorts our Saviour, "because at what hour you know not the Son of man will come" (*Matt.* xxiv. 44). We insure this fidelity or final perseverance by serving God perfectly moment after moment, hour after hour, day after day. It will then not matter whether He cuts us off in youth, or permits us to live to a ripe old age. We shall be

ever ready for His summons, and so may confidently expect to hear those consoling words: "Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (*Matt.* xxv. 21).

SECTION III.

SELF-DENIAL OR ACTIVE PURGATION.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (*Luke* ix. 23). In these words Our Saviour invites us to follow Him in the three phases of the way to perfection. They are: (1) self-denial, or rising above the natural man by self-discipline and prayer; (2) taking up our daily cross by the practice of virtue; (3) following the Master in doing God's will in all things.

In studying the subject of self-denial we will consider Self-denial in General, Self-examination, Self-castigation, Subjugation of the Carnal Man, Subjugation of the External Senses, Subjugation of the Internal Senses, Subjugation of the Sensitive Appetites, Subjugation of the Will, Subjugation of the Mind to Truth, and Subjugation of the Creature to the Creator by the Use of the Means of Grace.

I. SELF-DENIAL IN GENERAL.

1. *Object of Self-Denial — Purity of Heart.*

"Put off the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of error, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and truth" (*Eph.* iv. 22). The object of Christian self-denial is to acquire purity of heart. This is done (1) by purging our consciences of the guilt of sin; (2) by doing penance for our sins; (3) by rooting out our bad habits; (4) by conquering our evil inclinations; (5) and by planting the seed of virtue in our hearts. As the grace of God is the efficient cause of this purification, we can make our self-denial productive only by sanctifying it by prayer. In fact self-denial and prayer must be the inseparable companions of every one that journeys on the narrow way.

2. *Motive of Self-Denial — The Fear of the Lord.*

"Fear Him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (*Matt.* xix. 28). The fear of the Lord is reverence for God on account of His power to punish all who violate His holy law. God is everywhere and sees all things. "In Him we live, and move, and are." He has

given no one an indefinite lease on life. "At what hour you know not the Son of man will come." "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this, the judgment." "Then will He render to every man according to his works." But as "the Lord is good to them that hope in Him, to the soul that seeketh Him," the Saviour exhorts us to be converted and live. "Do penance," He says, "for the kingdom of God is at hand." And St. Paul assures us that "if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged" by God. Thus the mercy of God gives the sinner hope and inspires him with incipient love, while the fear of the Lord prompts him to be converted and live. Indeed, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (*Heb.* x. 31).

3. *Order in Self-Denial.*

To insure the success of an undertaking we must do three things: (1) Concentrate our efforts on what is essential; (2) follow a wise plan in our development; (3) and pay proper attention to the smallest details in due season.

In applying these general rules to the work of self-denial the masters of the spiritual life direct us (1) to purify our hearts first from mortal sin, its proximate occasion, and the bad

habit it may have engendered; (2) in eradicating venial sin, to concentrate our efforts first on external sins that easily scandalize our neighbor; (3) with the advice of our spiritual director to single out our predominant fault and make it the object of particular examination; (4) finally, to be humble, patient, and persevering in our efforts, and to put our hope of success in Jesus and Mary.

4. *Signs of Self-Denial.*

As the resistance of the wind or of the waves and the passing of landmarks indicate the speed with which we progress on land or on water, so there are certain signs that indicate our progress on the way to perfection: (1) the ease and persistence with which we go against our natural likes from a motive of faith indicates the subjugation of nature to grace; (2) detestation of sin and the avoidance of its voluntary occasions is another sure sign of a soul's true conversion to God; (3) holy indifference, or detachment from the world and earthly things; (4) the dominion we exercise over our passions, or triumph over the flesh; (5) and the facility we acquire in practising humility and obedience are sure signs of progress in self-denial.

5. *Counsels on Self-Denial.*

In the practice of Christian self-denial we should (1) guard against excessive scrupulosity by cultivating that loving confidence in God which is the foundation of interior peace, imparts to us the liberty of brethren of Jesus Christ, and facilitates our perseverance; (2) we should be discreet in our efforts so as not to unbalance our minds, ruin our health, or give us a distaste for spiritual things; (3) we should concentrate our efforts on the present, and trust with the aid of grace to do great things for the love of God; (4) we should never relax our vigilance, our penance, or our prayers; (5) we should ever prepare for greater conflicts, and not judge our victory by the presence of sensible sweetness in our souls. This God gives us in the beginning to draw us on in the spiritual life; (6) we should not despair even if we had the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, but begin anew in all humility.

II. SELF-EXAMINATION.

Self-knowledge is a necessary requisite for prudent self-denial. It is naturally difficult to attain (1) because it is almost impossible for us to obtain a true perspective of ourselves; (2)

because the study of self is humiliating; (3) because our pride and self-love easily deceive us; (4) because the world and the devil frown on such a study and fill us with repugnance for it.

With the aid of God's grace, however, we can easily make progress in learning ourselves, provided we are faithful in the practice of self-examination. And in proportion as we grow in the knowledge of self, shall we also grow in humility, and realize the necessity of cultivating a closer union with God. In proportion as we acquire a knowledge of ourselves and profit by it may we say with St. Paul: "I so run, not as at an uncertainty: I so fight, not as one beating the air: But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection" (1 *Cor.* ix. 26).

If, on the other hand, we neglect our self-examination, we become the willing slaves of tepidity and spiritual stagnation, from which we may be aroused only when the light of eternity will reveal our real selves before the judgment seat of God.

1. *A General Examination of the Interior.*

A general examination of the interior is a complete accounting of our spiritual condition. It examines (1) our natural or acquired inclinations; (2) our fidelity to grace; (3) our con-

duct when tempted; (4) the good and the evil we have done; (5) and the intention, the motive, and the rule of our actions.

This general examination, when carefully made, gradually enlightens us to see ourselves as we are in the sight of God. By renewing it from time to time we may observe not only our general progress or retrogression, but also discover the weak points in our character on which we should concentrate our energies. As successful merchants take an inventory of their stock and balance their accounts frequently, so we do well in making a general examination of our interior every month or at least once a year.

2. *The Daily Examination of Conscience.*

As children of God and heirs to the kingdom of heaven we should not retire at night without settling our accounts with the Almighty. In the examination of conscience which we are urged to make at the close of the day, we are to inquire only into the actual sins we may have committed, and blot them out by an act of perfect contrition or fervent love of God. The strictest severity towards ourselves should characterize this examination, not so much in the time we devote to it, as (1) in the rigor with

which we judge ourselves, (2) in the sorrow we elicit, (3) and in the firmness of our purpose of amendment. With these sentiments we may retire in peace, and die in peace if God so ordains, for "a contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (*Ps.* l. 19).

3. *The Particular Examination.*

The particular examination inquires specially into the condition of a fault to be eradicated, or of a virtue to be practised. In the first stage of the spiritual life it is advisable to make our predominant fault the subject of this particular examination. As we progress it may be profitable to select the subject of fraternal charity.

In regard to this examination it may be well to remark (1) that the subject should correspond with the stage of our spiritual progress; (2) that the subject should not be changed until additional progress has been made; (3) that the particular examination may be made at any convenient time during the day, or in connection with the evening examination; (4) that the time devoted to this exercise should be brief; (5) that the examination itself should consist of a short prayer, the self-inspection, an act of contrition for failure, of gratitude to God for

success, and renewal of our resolution. It should conclude with a prayer to obtain the blessing of heaven on our resolution.

4. *The Examination for a Good Confession.*

As the immediate preparation for a good confession, the object of this examination of conscience is to discover the actual sins we may have committed since our last worthy confession. In daily life pious souls are often overscrupulous about this examination, while negligent souls are inclined to be positively lax in determining the time and attention which they should devote to it.

Let us therefore see (1) what is essential, (2) what is advisable, (3) and what should be avoided in this examination.

As mortal sins alone must be confessed, it is essential that the penitent use ordinary care, or make a serious effort, to find out his mortal sins, including their number and the circumstances which change their nature. It is even advisable, when a penitent has a mortal sin to confess, to confine both his examination and his accusation to mortal sins, as this will emphasize his sorrow and purpose of amendment. In regard to venial sins it must be borne in mind (1) that there is no obligation to confess them

as they may be forgiven by an act of contrition; (2) that it leads to delusion to confess them without sorrow or purpose of amendment; (3) that it is advisable, therefore, to examine ourselves on the more deliberate venial sins which we intend to confess, and for which we are truly sorry. Mere imperfections, however, are not a matter for absolution, and should, therefore, not be sought in this examination.

In conclusion it may be well to remark, that, though sorrow and purpose of amendment are always pleasing to God, a morose inspection of our past is apt to delude the mind and excite self-commiseration, or lead to discouragement, instead of having a purifying effect on the heart.

5. *Sinful Actions.*

Sinful actions must be the first object of our self-examination. They may be venial or mortal according as they are a deliberate transgression of the law of God in a slight or in a grievous matter. Venial sins lessen the fervor of the love of God in our hearts, make us less worthy of His grace, and make us deserving of temporal punishment.

The effects of mortal sin on the soul are: (1) the privation of sanctifying grace; (2) the loss of all past merits and even the power of

meriting while in sin; (3) remorse of conscience; (4) the enmity of God; (5) the penalty of eternal damnation.

Some mortal sins are called sins against the Holy Ghost because they abuse the means of salvation. They are presumption, despair, impugning the known truth, envy of a neighbor's spiritual progress, obstinacy, and final impenitence.

Some mortal sins provoke God in a special manner and are called sins crying to heaven for vengeance. They are homicide, sodomy, oppressing the poor, and defrauding the laborer of his hire. Some sins fill the soul with ignorance, malice, and concupiscence, and thereby incite man to other sins. For this reason they are called Capital Sins. They are pride, avarice, gluttony, lust, envy, anger, and sloth.

6. *Bad Habits.*

Bad habits are sinful inclinations developed by repeated acts.

When deliberately contracted with a knowledge of their malice, bad habits are sinful from the beginning, and they and their acts subjects for confession. But when they grow on one without any bad will on one's part, they certainly are subjects for serious examination and

correction, as soon as one learns their evil nature and tendency.

Bad habits produce a twofold evil effect on the soul: (1) they facilitate the commission of sin without distracting the mind from other things; (2) and cause a routine of action which is not necessarily dependent on the influence of the will.

As soon as we realize the evil tendency of a sinful habit it becomes our duty to oppose and eradicate it. In fact, only in this way can we give evidence of our good will, for the Saviour says: "By their fruits you shall know them" (*Matt.* vii. 16).

7. *The Predominant Fault.*

Human nature is selfish and manifests its inordinate self-love in every individual by a tendency to some particular vice. This tendency or special inclination is called that person's predominant passion. When this passion shapes one's action, the result is called that one's predominant fault. If unchecked this fault will be repeated until it blinds its victim to his condition, vitiates his character, and hurries him into many excesses.

As the predominant fault always tends to one of the seven capital sins the saints were right

in calling it man's worst foe. On this account St. Alphonsus wisely directs us, in conquering our faults, not to fix our attention on some minor fault, but to concentrate all our efforts on the predominant one as the root of all the rest. We may do this in a way most conducive to our progress by making the predominant fault the subject of our particular examination and by humbly making it a matter of confession.

8. *Human Imperfections.*

An imperfection may be defined (1) as an act or omission opposed to a mere counsel; (2) as the material transgression of a commandment, that is, as an action which was entirely indeliberate and involuntary both in itself and in its cause, as involuntary distractions in prayer. As counsels do not bind in conscience, and, as actions in general must be deliberate and voluntary to be morally good or bad, an imperfection is no sin in either case.

Though imperfections are not matter for confession, they become matter for self-examination, spiritual direction, and amendment. As indications of our spiritual deficiency they should incite us to vigilance, mortification, and prayer.

9. *Idiosyncrasies.*

Idiosyncrasies are those peculiarities of temperament and character which differentiate the personality of individuals. They may be divided into three classes: (1) traits which constitute the charm of one's personality; (2) peculiarities, chiefly defects of temperament or character which have not yet been eradicated; (3) hobbies, or innocent peculiarities which an individual has specially developed. Idiosyncrasies of the first kind necessarily enter into every Christian character. Those of the second kind are found in the imperfect, while those of the third kind may be found alike in the sinner and in the saint, but not in the personalities of Jesus and Mary, who alone did the will of God perfectly in all things.

10. *The Delusions of Wrong Principles.*

By the delusion of a wrong principle we mean the self-deception which we practise by acting on an erroneous principle which we consider true. We may develop this principle as the result of an erroneous judgment of our own, though we are usually inoculated with its germ in our intercourse with others. Wrong principles are as numerous as the vain pursuits of

the world, and naturally lead to one of the following delusions: (1) by magnifying the material they belittle the spiritual order; (2) by emphasizing the temporal they obscure the true perspective of the eternal; (3) by lauding the dignity of man they lower the dignity of God; (4) by championing the liberty of man they rob him of his liberty as a child of God; (5) by emancipating him from subjection to his Maker they degrade him to the slavery of the flesh, the world, and the devil; (6) by extolling the pleasures of earth they belittle the joys of heaven; (7) by laying up treasures that perish they neglect the treasures of grace and merit; (8) by seeking the honors of earth they forfeit the glory of the angels and saints; (9) by fearing the opinions of men they incur the anger of the Almighty; (10) by seeking their heaven on earth they make sure of the torments of hell.

11. *The Delusions of Self-Love.*

When self-deception is caused by the prompting of our corrupt nature it is called a delusion of self-love. The delusions of self-love are not easily discovered or eradicated, because (1) they are more subtle than the delusions of wrong principles; (2) they enter more intimately into

our interior lives; (3) and are more effectually shielded by self-love.

The delusions of self-love prompt us (1) to be good to ourselves; (2) to seek our ease and comfort; (3) to keep ourselves from labor and suffering; (4) to minister to our gratifications. They lead us (1) to mistake the vain desire of virtue for actual progress; (2) to mistake passion for virtue; (3) to over-estimate our merit and entitle us to exemption and consideration; (4) and to underrate the value of others. When not discovered and checked in time the delusions of self-love will lead us (1) to relax our vigilance and prayer; (2) to give the credit to ourselves which belongs to God; (3) to be oversecure in temptation and wantonly to enter the occasion of sin. For these reasons the masters of the spiritual life exhort us often to make ourselves the subject of our meditations. In fact the Saviour warns us to "watch and pray lest we fall into temptation."

12. *Ambition.*

In the days of the ancient Roman republic the word "Ambition" was used in the sense of legitimate electioneering, or lawful canvassing for votes. Since then it has come to stand

for any desire and willingness to do great things. On this account timid souls are apt to confound it with presumption and the pursuit of vainglory, while the slothful are apt to point to its absence as an evidence of their trust in Providence and a justification of their laziness.

God has implanted ambition in human nature that we may strive to do His holy will in all things. Hence, when enlightened by faith, prompted by charity, and directed by obedience, ambition becomes true zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of souls. It prompts us to spare neither labor nor sacrifice, but to press forward in close imitation of the Master, and, with the help of His grace, to do the will of the heavenly Father in all things. On the other hand, when perverted by self-love, ambition prompts us to offend against charity and justice, to rebel against lawful authority, and even to follow the example of Lucifer himself.

As earth is a place of exertion and endurance, let us see to it that we have the ambition to save and sanctify our souls according to the plan of the Almighty. Then, putting our hope of success entirely in God, we may confidently say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (*Phil.* iv. 13).

13. *Self-Will.*

By the corruption of human nature through original sin the will of man has been weakened and brought into opposition to the will of God. The personal opposition of an individual to the will of God is expressed by self-will. If we follow the promptings of self-will we may have the satisfaction of doing our own will, but we thereby forfeit all claim to a reward in heaven. Hence, the beginning of the spiritual life consists in conquering our self-will, and its perfection in doing the will of God in all things. In proportion as we grasp this truth and use it as the rule of our lives, will we be encouraged by our divine Model, who says: "I do always the things that please Him" (*John* viii. 29).

14. *Sensuality.*

Sensuality is the tyranny of the flesh over the spirit. As intended by God man should be guided by reason in ministering to his temporal wants. By the corruption of his nature, however, not only was man's mind darkened and his will weakened, but his inferior faculties were perverted and his bodily members condemned to decay and death.

This perversion inclines man's carnal nature

to rebel against the dictates of reason, and to throw off the dominion of the will. In proportion as he yields man becomes the slave of his sensual nature. This slavery is called sensuality because it pampers the senses, though in reality it consists in pandering to the abnormal cravings of the vegetative faculties through the senses. For, without the craving of hunger, thirst, and sex, the glutton, the drunkard, and the impure would be rare indeed, while there would be little incentive to abuse the senses of taste and touch.

In man's present condition, however, he has to fear sensuality more than any other perverse influence, (1) because comparatively few exert themselves to a degree requisite to clarify their minds and strengthen their wills sufficiently to exercise dominion over all their actions; (2) because man's inferior faculties are the most difficult to subdue and to keep under control; (3) because of the craving in man for an endless possession of an infinite good. This craving, which prompts all man's actions, is perverted and intensified, but never satisfied by sensuality. Hence, the lower the sensualist falls, the greater his misery, the shorter his life, and the more terrible his eventual despair and remorse in hell.

15. *Peculiarities of the Cross.*

The Cross embraces all the contradictions, trials, and sufferings of life. The peculiarities of the Cross are its inalienable characteristics. Some of these characteristics deserve our special attention.

(1) The Cross intended for us by God is really light when borne in conformity with the divine will. Our imagination may magnify it, our self-love seek to escape it in spite of the fact that the Eternal Truth has said: "My yoke is sweet, and my burden light" (*Matt.* xi. 30).

(2) The Cross is our earthly burden, which we can not lay aside. "They that fear the hoar frost," says holy Job, "the snow shall fall upon them" (*Job* vi. 16).

(3) The Cross is an evidence of God's love; the higher our place is to be in heaven, the greater must be our Cross on earth. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chastiseth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (*Heb.* xii. 6).

(4) The Cross is proportioned to our strength. For "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able" (1 *Cor.* x. 13).

(5) The Cross passes quickly, and, as the

darkest cloud has always the brightest lining, so the heaviest Cross is the harbinger of the greatest blessing.

(6) The Cross, when faithfully borne through life, evolves into the Crown of heaven, but, when borne only through compulsion, distils the bitterest poison of hell.

16. *Man's Limitations.*

Man's limitations are those circumstances of his earthly pilgrimage which confine his efforts within the plan of God. To ensure our fidelity it is well to keep them in mind. They are life, talents, opportunity, and grace.

(1) Life is our activity on earth. It comes from God, and will end when God wills. It is the first loan we receive from God, and of which we shall have to render a strict account on the day of judgment. As holy Job says, "the life of man upon earth is a warfare." We can not remain neutral; we must enter the conflict. Shall we fight the battles of the Lord against the flesh, the world, and the devil, or shall we rebel against the Lord of majesty, our loving Benefactor, and truest Friend? Ah, blessed shall we be if our lives are such that it may be said to us as St. Paul said to the Colossians, "Your life is hid with Christ in God" (*Col.* iii. 3).

(2) Our talents are our powers of action. They are divine endowments to fit us for the position in God's plan for which He has destined us. If we correspond He will conduct us to it by the dispositions of His Providence and the voice of our superiors. It is our sacred duty to qualify for our calling, and to fill it to the best of our ability. Let us therefore bear in mind that the Master condemned the servant who neglected his talent as well as the one who misused it, and that "unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required" (*Luke* xii. 48).

(3) The opportunity of serving God is given us every moment in the spiritual life. If we profit by it in the present, it will bear fruit in eternity. If we permit it to pass by it will be lost forever.

(4) Grace is offered us in superabundance to attain that perfection to which God has destined us. Every grace we use earns an increase. Every grace we neglect or abuse will not only testify against us, but will be taken from us and given to another. If we squander the entire measure destined for our sanctification, we have no remaining hope of salvation but the privilege of prayer and of recourse to the intercession of Mary.

III. SELF-CASTIGATION OR PENANCE.

Self-castigation is the purification of man from the effects of sin by the practice of penance. As we offend God, defile our souls, and incur the penalty of sin by rebelling against God, so we honor God, purify our consciences, and make satisfaction for sin by voluntary penance. Let us now consider the causes we have for self-castigation and the ways of practising it.

1. *First Cause for Penance — Mortal Sin.*

Mortal sin is a deliberate, voluntary transgression of God's law in a serious matter. Its malice consists in rebelling against God with base contempt and vile ingratitude, and thereby making an idol unto ourselves of some sinful gratification. Its effects are: (1) it insults the majesty and goodness of God; (2) it deprives man of sanctifying grace, and past merit, and renders him incapable to merit heaven; (3) it defiles the soul; (4) it burdens the conscience with guilt; (5) it condemns the sinner to the punishment of an outraged conscience, the loss of God's friendship, and brings upon him the punishment of hell.

The means by which man can undo the effects of mortal sin and avoid a relapse are sacramental confession, contrition, amendment, resistance to temptation, flight from the occasion of sin, distrust of self and confidence in the mercy of God.

2. *Second Cause for Penance — Venial Sin.*

A venial sin is (1) a deliberate, voluntary transgression of God's law in a light matter, or (2) a transgression in a serious matter where the mind was prevented from realizing the extent of its malice through ignorance, misconception or inadvertence, or where mind or will were momentarily hampered, but not paralyzed by sudden passion, nervousness, or fear. Where physical violence, however, or nervousness, fear, or antecedent passion deprive man entirely of the dominion of an action, it is no sin in the sight of God. The effects of venial sin are: (1) it slights God; (2) it lessens the fear of the Lord and the love of God in our hearts; (3) it renders us unworthy of special graces; (4) it diminishes our fervor and devotion; (5) it disposes us for the commission of mortal sin; (6) it makes us deserving of temporal punishment.

The means of blotting out venial sin and of avoiding it in the future are contrition, reparation, vigilance, serious effort, mistrust of self and confidence in God.

3. *Third Cause for Penance — Tepidity.*

Tepidity is habitual negligence in doing good and in avoiding evil. It is a disgust in the service of God, a spiritual dyspepsia, a stagnation in the spiritual life, that enervates the mind, smothers charity, extinguishes devotion, weakens virtue, and darkens the understanding. Tepidity is defined by St. Alphonsus as the habit of fully deliberate venial sin. Tepidity is a rebellion against the fundamental laws of labor, suffering, and prayer, and therefore an abomination in the sight of God. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot, nor cold, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth" (*Apoc.* iii. 16).

A complete reconstruction of the spiritual edifice is necessary to cure a tepid soul: prayer, meditation, concentration, recollection, strenuous labor, patient endurance, detachment, a spirit of faith, fervor, frequent examination of conscience, seclusion, and the exercises of a retreat alone can effect a cure.

4. *Fourth Cause for Penance — Participation in the Sins of Others.*

We may participate in the sins of others (1) by neglecting a reproof suggested by charity; (2) by not preventing the sins of others when our duty demands it; (3) by scandalizing others or offering them the occasion of sin; (4) by aiding them in the commission of sin; (5) by committing sin with them; (6) and by tempting them or coercing them to sin.

We incur the guilt of the sins of others, as well as the obligation of leading them to repentance in so far as we have participated in their sins. "It is impossible that scandals should not come: but woe to him through whom they come" (*Luke* xvii. 1).

To guard against participating in the sins of others, we should bear in mind (1) that such conduct offends God most grievously; (2) that He will demand a strict account of our stewardship; (3) and that those whom we have helped on the way to perdition will be our accusers on the day of the general reckoning.

5. *Fifth Cause for Penance — The Sins of the World.*

There are many sins committed that are not of our volition and which we cannot prevent.

They offend God, wound the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and ruin countless souls. Zeal for the honor and glory of God should prompt us to regret them, to grieve over them, and thereby to make atonement to the outraged majesty and goodness of God. Our love for Jesus Christ should prompt us to offer Him sympathy and consolation, and to make reparation to His adorable Heart for the coldness, indifference, and malice of mankind. Finally, zeal for the salvation of souls and the brotherhood of mankind should prompt us to desire the welfare of every human being, and to do all in our power to promote it by making satisfaction for the sins of the world.

6. *Sixth Cause for Penance — Imperfections.*

Imperfections are involuntary defects in the service of God, or material transgressions of His holy law committed without advertence of the mind or consent of the will. As imperfections are committed without malice or guilt, they are not matter for confession. As defects in God's service they are matter for self-examination and correction, for spiritual direction, and for voluntary penance and mortification. The teaching of St. John of the Cross, that every imperfection is a tendency to one of

the capital sins, should prompt us to redouble our vigilance in discovering, and our efforts in overcoming them. To further our spiritual progress, let us verify this statement of the saint.

a. Imperfections Inclining to Pride. Pride is inordinate self-esteem. The imperfections that tend to foster pride are: (1) to attribute a feeling of devotion to our efforts; (2) to desire to be considered more perfect than those who experience no sensible devotion; (3) to perform acts of devotion to attract the attention of others; (4) to incline to censure others; (5) to attempt to direct the superiors and the confessor in discharging their duties.

Inclinations to pride may be overcome by vigilance, and by voluntary acts of humiliation and mortification.

b. Imperfections Inclining to Avarice. Avarice is an inordinate solicitude for created things. It may be carnal or spiritual. The imperfections tending to carnal avarice are: (1) an inordinate desire of material things; (2) seeking them for their own sake; (3) hating to part with them; (4) centering our affections on them.

The imperfections tending to spiritual avarice are: (1) a desire for an abundance of grace and extraordinary favors with which we will not or

can not co-operate; (2) overestimating articles of devotion and pious practices to the detriment of true piety and devotion; (3) to profess great sanctity while neglecting interior mortification.

Being unworthy of God's favors we should (1) use material things to supply our wants and to help our neighbor; (2) guard against all inordinate attachment to them; (3) humbly and gracefully accept the spiritual favors God gives us; (4) seek conversion of the heart and solid virtue; (5) perform our private and public devotions according to the general practice; (6) cultivate a spirit of detachment in all things.

c. Imperfections Inclining to Lust. Impure feelings may be aroused without any fault on our part, (1) by our corrupt nature; (2) by the devil; (3) by necessary associations with others, especially with persons of the opposite sex; (4) by innocent familiarity with virtuous persons; (5) by a sympathy between devotion of the heart and sensual inclinations in our pious exercises; (6) by too great or too vivid a fear of impurity itself.

To spiritualize our inferior nature we should (1) guard against doing anything in the discharge of our duty that might unnecessarily arouse improper feelings; (2) despise those that arise spontaneously, and not omit our duty to

God, to our neighbor, or to ourselves on their account; (3) to abstain from all sentimentality, inordinate familiarity, and carnal friendship; (4) to redouble our prayers; (5) to seek to please God in all things and implicitly to trust in His help; (6) in our mistrust of self not to picture particular temptations to our minds; (7) to ground ourselves in humility; (8) to perform little acts of exterior mortification.

d. Imperfections Tending to Anger. We manifest a tendency to anger, (1) when through false zeal we grow impatient at the mistakes of others, or take delight in denouncing them; (2) when we grow impatient with ourselves on account of our repeated faults and slow progress in virtue; (3) when we grow sad, discouraged, or impatient because God has seen fit to leave our souls dry, dark, and languid, without sensible consolation. By such conduct we disgrace the spiritual life, scandalize others, and give ignorant persons reason to infer that sanctity is a mixture of haughtiness, temper, and effeminacy.

To counteract these tendencies we should (1) concentrate our attention on our duty, and be patient but firm and persevering in our efforts to make progress; (2) pay no attention to the defects of others, and treat them with indulgence

when brought to our notice; (3) place our trust in God and make ourselves worthy of His favors by humility, prayer, mortification, and honest effort; (4) be alert to suppress the first impulse to anger when we are specially prone to it; (5) seek the grace to do God's will and not heavenly consolations in our prayers.

e. Imperfections Tending to Gluttony. The imperfections that tend to gluttony may be carnal or spiritual. Those of a carnal tendency manifest themselves (1) in the pleasure we might take in thinking of food and drink; (2) in speaking unnecessarily of it; (3) in wishing for it out of due season.

Those which tend to spiritual gluttony are: (1) to desire spiritual consolations and favors rather than solid piety; (2) to follow one's own inclination in doing good rather than the will of God; (3) to forget one's own sinfulness and become too familiar with God; (4) to indulge in extraordinary works of penance for the delusive consolation they may afford.

To counteract these tendencies to gluttony we should (1) seek to please God, and not to gratify ourselves; (2) be indifferent to all but the holy will of God, and accept material and spiritual favors with humble gratitude; (3) above all mortify our will by cultivating obedi-

ence, purity of heart, and conformity to the divine will; (4) cultivate a special devotion to Christ crucified.

f. Imperfections Tending to Envy. Envy is sadness at another's welfare in so far as this diminishes one's own excellence. Its tendencies are: (1) to feel hurt when others are praised or honored; (2) to minimize the reputation of others by disparaging remarks; (3) to be pleased when the defects of others are made known; (4) to rejoice when such defects are criticized by others.

To cure imperfections tending to envy we should (1) practise charity; (2) rejoice at the success of others; (3) wish them well; (4) extol their virtues; (5) praise them publicly when circumstances permit.

g. Imperfections Tending to Sloth. Sloth is indifference in action. When sloth becomes habitual it is called tepidity or lukewarmness. A person may be physically infirm, or perform a slothful deed, and even commit a serious fault, without being in the dangerous state of tepidity. The tendencies to sloth are: (1) a facility in omitting or curtailing our spiritual exercises; (2) irreverence or voluntary distractions in them; (3) a want of recollection; (4) a want of practical faith in our daily actions.

To remedy the imperfections tending to sloth we should (1) cultivate a spirit of recollection; (2) frequently strengthen our good resolution; (3) frequently purify our motives; (4) frequently renew our good intention; (5) cultivate a spirit of prayer.

7. *Castigation of Actual Sin — Sacramental Confession.*

Sacramental confession is the means instituted by a merciful Saviour to reconcile repentant Christian sinners to God. When made with the proper dispositions a good sacramental confession cancels the effects of sin, and bestows the peace which the world can not give, (1) by removing the sinner's anxiety about the past; (2) by reconciling him to the heavenly Father in the present; (3) by giving him grace, hope, and opportunity to work for heaven in the future.

To impart this consolation the confession must be made with faith, hope, and integrity. Faith teaches (1) that this is the sacrament of God's mercy and reconciliation; (2) that the priest has the same power of forgiving sin which Jesus exercised while on earth; (3) that the words of absolution in a good confession impart forgiveness of sin and divine assurance of recon-

ciliation. A good confession is made with hope (1) in the mercy of God, and (2) in the infinite merits of Jesus Christ.

The integrity requisite for a good confession prescribes only (1) that mortal sins be confessed, and that by their proper name — this makes the confession clear; (2) that as nearly as possible the number of times each mortal sin was committed, and the circumstances which change their nature, be stated — this makes the confession brief; (3) that the confession be made with advertence to the sinner's guilt, thereby making it humble; (4) finally, that the confession be honestly made with the intention of communicating this knowledge to the confessor, thereby making the confession sincere.

Though there is no obligation of confessing venial sins, it is advisable to do so (1) when a person has no mortal sin to confess; (2) when he is in doubt whether a sin is mortal or venial; (3) whenever he is sorry for having committed the venial sin.

When Satan beholds the saints in heaven who have escaped his slavery by making a good confession he is filled with rage. As he can not harm the souls that are already saved, he employs every means his cunning can devise to keep souls on earth from deriving those benefits

from the sacrament of Penance which Jesus in His mercy has destined for them. He is the hidden fiend who scoffs through ignorant men at the tribunal of penance. He is the insidious tempter who seeks to drive the repentant sinner to despair, fills him with false shame, and harasses him with groundless fears as soon as he resolves with the Prodigal to return to his Father. And he does this in spite of the fact that sacramental confession is more natural to the Christian soul than candor to a repentant child, in spite of the fact that mercy is more natural to a compassionate God than the kiss of forgiveness is to a loving mother.

8. *Castigation of the Guilty Mind—Detestation of Sin.*

When we commit sin we inconsiderately prefer a finite good to God, the infinite Good. If our sin is mortal our minds despise God to that extent that they judge that finite good worthy of being our god, and as such decree it to be the final object of our existence. If our sin is venial our minds scorn the friendship of God to the extent we gratify our self-love.

The human mind is naturally just, however. So when we reflect on our action and judge it dispassionately, we not only realize that we have

acted unjustly, but we proceed and condemn ourselves for having despised God, defiled our souls, and merited punishment. The more we ponder the effects of sin, the more do we begin to realize that it is the greatest evil in the world. And in proportion as we realize the great evil of sin in general, the more do we condemn our own sins in particular and detest them as an abomination in the sight of God, as firebrands from hell that alone can cause our temporal and eternal misery.

9. *Castigation of the Guilty Will — Sorrow for Sin.*

The human will necessarily seeks what is good. Hence, as soon as it learns from the mind that it has chosen the greatest possible evil by committing sin, it is filled with grief. When considered in relation to the loss occasioned by sin, this grief is called remorse; when viewed as a pain we endure, it is called compunction; when viewed in its bearing on our sinful transgression, it is called penitence or repentance; and when viewed in its bearing on the future, it is called purpose of amendment. The motives which prompt us to regret our sin, fill us with aversion for it, and spur us on to penance and perseverance are: the fear

of the torments of hell, the desire of heaven, and the love of God. These three motive powers of the spiritual life are kept alive within us by frequent reflection on the eternal truths. Hence the Holy Ghost exhorts us: "In all thy works remember thy last end and thou shalt never sin" (*Ecclus.* vii. 40).

10. *Castigation of the Guilty Faculties — Purpose of Amendment.*

The grief of the soul for having offended God, when considered in its bearing on the future, that is, as a purpose of amendment, embraces a fivefold determination: (1) the general resolution to avoid evil and to do good; (2) to avoid at least every mortal sin, and every venial sin that we have just confessed; (3) to uproot any bad habit we may have contracted, and to guard against contracting it again; (4) to avoid the proximate, voluntary occasion of every mortal sin, as well as of those venial sins we have just confessed; (5) to use the means of grace necessary to ensure fidelity to our determination.

We can ensure the stability of our purpose of amendment: (1) by mistrusting ourselves and placing our confidence in God; (2) by renewing it as often as we kneel in prayer; (3)

by keeping the Christian ideal ever before our minds.

11. *Castigation of Sinful Man — Satisfaction.*

Even after the acts of repentance, conversion and purpose of amendment have been formed, certain external effects of sin may remain. They consist in the wrong that was done by sin to God and to our neighbor. These may be removed by works of satisfaction. Works of satisfaction are of three kinds: reparatory, vindictive or penitential, and medicinal or precautionary.

(1) Reparation is made to God by repairing His honor, and by making up for remissness in His service. Reparation is made to our neighbor by repairing the wrong done him through injustice, lies, detraction, and slander, and by treating him with kindness for any want of attention.

(2) The vindictive or penitential works that satisfy for our sins are prayer, as atonement to God; fasting, as a castigation of ourselves; and alms-deeds as reparation to our neighbor. Prayer, fasting, and almsdeeds are here used in their widest application to the practice of religion, self-denial, and the works of mercy.

(3) The medicinal or precautionary works of satisfaction are intended to protect us against a lapse, or a relapse into sin. They are acts of self-denial that are usually called "Mortification." Their importance arises from the evident truth that a prevention is better than a cure.

12. *Castigation of the Repentant Sinner — Actual Amendment.*

Amendment is the fruit of true repentance —"By their fruits you shall know them." To bring forth fruit worthy of repentance we must reduce our purpose of repentance to practice. If like Peter we presumed on our own strength, like Peter we have learned by bitter experience to mistrust ourselves. To reduce our purpose of amendment to practice we must (1) continually mistrust ourselves; (2) cultivate a boundless confidence in God; (3) use the opportunity of the present to do violence to ourselves in avoiding sin and its occasions, in resisting temptation and conquering bad habits, and in doing good to repair the past, to secure ourselves in the present, and to make certain of our perseverance.

13. *Medicinal Castigation — Mortification.*

Mortification is the performance or endurance of anything repugnant to our natural inclinations for the purpose of submitting ourselves to the influence of grace and doing God's holy will. When it places an external restraint upon us, mortification is called external or corporal; when it does violence to the faculties of the soul it is called interior or spiritual. When mortification takes place at our own discretion it is called active; and when it consists in cheerfully enduring the trials sent or permitted by divine Providence it is called passive mortification.

Corresponding to the three stages of the spiritual life are three stages or degrees of Christian mortification or self-denial. In the first stage the earthly pilgrim must deny himself to the extent of avoiding the voluntary, proximate occasion, and of resisting temptation to mortal sin, but wastes much time, neglects much grace, and commits many venial sins. In the second stage he does as much violence to himself as is necessary to avoid deliberate venial sin. Finally, in the third stage the Christian dies perfectly to self and offers God a complete sacrifice (1) by conquering even his imperfections;

(2) by using every moment of time; (3) by co-operating with every grace; (4) and by suffering every trial in conformity with the divine will.

The ignorant and the sensualist do not realize the importance of mortification. But in proportion as any one becomes Christlike will he also see that mortification (1) subjects man to the influence of grace; (2) makes him triumph over the flesh, the world, and the devil; (3) aids him in the practice of virtue; (4) ensures his perseverance; (5) gives him spiritual peace and joy; (6) and unites him to God in all things.

In the practice of mortification discretion is necessary to avoid the harm resulting from extremes. In exterior mortification the extremes are reached (1) in a species of sensuality on the one hand, which denounces all voluntary external mortification, (2) and by an excessive rigorism on the other, which injures the body and paralyzes the energies of the soul. The neglect of voluntary interior mortification fosters inordinate self-love, and suffocates the love of God in our hearts. As long as interior mortification is well regulated there is no danger in going to extremes in its practice. As a safeguard against imprudence and excessive rigor-

ism, however, austerities or extraordinary corporal mortifications should not be practised without the previous sanction of the spiritual director.

Prudence or discretion in the practice of voluntary mortification prescribes (1) that no mortification should interfere with the performance of our duty or the practice of virtue; (2) that mortification be always free from singularity; (3) that in interior mortification we begin by discovering, subjugating, and sanctifying our predominant passion; (4) that we anticipate the rebellion of our passions; (5) that we never lose sight of our pride and anger; (6) that we be not content with a little progress in interior mortification, but continue resolutely until we have gained a complete victory.

14. *Rigorous Castigation — Austerities.*

Extraordinary corporal penances are called austerities. Austerities have always been practised in the Catholic Church, and are prescribed to some extent in most of the Religious Orders, particularly in those whose special vocation is to atone with Christ for the sins of the world.

Austerities consist: (1) in being content with the essentials in food, clothing, and accommoda-

tions; (2) in the observance of continuous silence, abstinence, and fasting; (3) in keeping long vigils, in using hairshirts, ciliciums, and disciplines; (4) in performing the most menial work, and in spending long hours in prayer.

Ordinarily it would be both presumptuous and rash to inflict penances so severe on ourselves. In fact, as Catholics we should attempt it only when (1) we have a special vocation to such a life; (2) after that vocation has been carefully investigated and positively sanctioned by our spiritual director.

15. *Our Spiritual Guide — The Priest.*

The priest is specially called by God. He prepares himself by years of study, prayer, and self-discipline for his work of love and sacrifice. The priest becomes our spiritual father at the baptismal font, is devoted to us throughout our life, and smooths our passage to a happy eternity.

His personality may change, but the priest is ever (1) the ambassador of Christ, bringing a message of hope and love; (2) our mediator at the altar, offering God an acceptable sacrifice; (3) the agent of God's mercy in the confessional, purifying our souls in the blood of the Lamb; (4) a heavenly almoner at all times,

enriching us with Christ's merits in the sacraments, and blessings of the Church; (5) a good shepherd, who has consecrated his life to our welfare; (6) our guardian angel in the flesh, ever ready to sympathize with us, to console us, to direct us, to guard and guide us to temporal and eternal union with God.

More than the reverence, love, and obedience of children to their earthly parents should be our devotion to the priest, the pastor, the physician of our souls. He, who has renounced all earthly ties to become another Christ for our sake, merits our confidence, our loyalty, our gratitude, and our love.

IV. SUBJUGATION OF THE CARNAL MAN.

Our first duty in the practice of mortification is the subjugation of the carnal man. This we accomplish by assuming an attitude towards our environment which will be favorable for the development of virtue, and by acquiring those habits that, according to the teaching and example of our divine Model, must serve as the basis of the interior life.

1. *Spirit of Retirement.*

"Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I will show thee. And I will make thee great and bless thee and magnify thy name" (*Gen.* xii. 1).

These words the Almighty addressed to Abraham of old. He repeats them to every soul of good will. To be His devoted children we must withdraw at least in spirit from that world which is at enmity with God. We hearken to this invitation of the Lord by cultivating a spirit of retirement. This spirit consists (1) in being indifferent to the follies of the world; (2) in shunning notoriety; (3) in appearing in public only when actuated by some good reason. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me" (*Gal.* vi. 14).

2. *Plain Dwelling.*

"I have chosen to be an abject in the house of God, rather than dwell in the tabernacles of sinners" (*Ps.* lxxxiii. 11). To cultivate a spirit of retirement we must banish the spirit of the world from our homes. The greatest slaves of the world make their dwellings places of lux-

ury and cultivate a haughty reserve in their conduct. A true child of God, however, manifests his indifference to the follies of the world as well as his spirit of faith in the erection and furnishing of his earthly dwelling without violating the canons of taste or sacrificing his station in life. He manifests his simple, Christian taste especially in decorating his home with the images of his crucified Master, of the Virgin Mother, and of the saints, and thus he hopes, after dwelling in intimate union with them on earth, to be found worthy one day to dwell with them in the mansions of heaven.

3. *Modest Dress.*

The Scriptures tell us that our first parents invented clothing to cover their nakedness. In our day clothing is often a necessary protection against the inclemency of the weather. But the fashions of dress are indicative of Christian modesty, or of a worldly spirit. For this reason St. Paul wrote: "Let your modesty be known to all men" (*Phil.* iv. 5). For the same reasons the world makes use of clothes to gratify its desire of luxury and thereby seduces many thoughtless souls.

As children of God we must therefore (1) remember that our clothes should indicate our

Christian modesty; (2) dress according to our station in life; (3) prefer utility and modesty in dress to style or fashion; (4) and guard against taking scandal from the immodest clothing of the slaves of the world—"There is a shame that bringeth glory and grace" (*Eccles.* iv. 25).

4. *Plain Fare.*

The world deifies the flesh and worships it by ministering to its cravings. According to St. Paul those are the slaves of the world, "whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (*Phil.* iii. 19). We must indeed eat to live, but we should not live to eat. The slaves of the world gratify their vanity and pervert their taste by serving costly viands, and they degrade themselves and court sickness and death by intemperance in eating and drinking. Plain fare on the other hand is more nutritious, more easily digested, and more conducive to health, happiness, and a ripe old age.

5. *Simplicity.*

"The simplicity of the just shall guide them" (*Prov.* xi. 3). Simplicity is that fidelity to truth which abhors all duplicity and de-

ception. Truth is from God, deception from Satan. Hence the Saviour says: "Let your speech be yea, yea; no, no: and that which is over and above this is of evil" (*Matt.* v. 37).

Simplicity in thought, word, and deed makes us (1) humble in our own estimation; (2) pleasing in the sight of God; (3) honorable among men; (4) confiding in God; (5) and generous towards our neighbor.

6. *Cheerfulness.*

Cheerfulness is the disposition of looking on the bright side of life. It manifests itself in looks, words, and actions that have a soothing influence on all present. Cheerfulness results from a conscientious performance of duty, united to a strong trust in divine Providence.

Cheerfulness has a tendency to lighten our burdens, to sweeten our sorrows, and to give us a relish for labor, endurance, and prayer. It disposes us to be generous with God, indulgent with our neighbor, and forgetful of ourselves. No wonder, then, that the Scripture says: "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 *Cor.* ix. 7.)

7. *Habit of Industry.*

A habit of industry is a disposition for work. Labor is life's first law. "If any man will not

work, neither let him eat" (2 *Thess.* iii. 10). A habit of industry is conducive to happiness (1) by giving us an object in life; (2) by compelling us to take exercise, which is necessary for the preservation of health; (3) by supplying diversion for the mind; (4) by giving us profitable occupation for our time; (5) by imparting a relish to our recreation; (6) by insuring rest in our repose; (7) by keeping us from vice; (8) by disposing us to help a neighbor in need. A habit of industry is likewise essential to success. It (1) teaches concentration of our energies; (2) imparts method to our procedure, (3) and insures perseverance in our efforts.

Finally, a habit of industry disposes us for a Christian life (1) by teaching us self-discipline; (2) by giving us the mastery over ourselves; (3) and by grounding us in natural virtue.

8. *Patient Endurance.*

It is impossible to escape all suffering in this valley of tears. Our only choice in the matter is between the patient endurance of the sufferings Providence sends us, or the enforced endurance of the greater sufferings of our own choice.

Patient endurance of the sufferings of life

(1) gives stability of character; (2) grounds us in self-knowledge; (3) dispels delusions; (4) detaches us from things of earth; (5) broadens our sympathies for struggling mankind; (6) disposes us for the grace of God; (7) and leads to solid virtue and true spiritual progress.

Patient endurance in the trials of life is facilitated (1) by not wasting our energies about the past; (2) by not worrying about the future; (3) by not magnifying our present trials; (4) by recalling the sufferings of Christ and His saints; (5) by cultivating conformity to the holy will of God.

9. *Avoidance of Singularity.*

Singularity is affectation in practical life. As humility produces simplicity, so pride begets singularity. Singularity is primarily a vice of the interior, but manifests itself exteriorly in various ways. According to its particular tendency it poses (1) in the seriousness of the magistrate; (2) in the science of the learned; (3) in the independence of the rich; (4) and even in the humility and devotion of a Christian soul. Singularity (1) gives a false view of the minor affairs of life; (2) pursues fancies instead of acquiring solid virtue; (3) multiplies one's cares; (4) and imparts the im-

pression that those who practise it are not quite sound of mind.

The remedy for singularity is "to put off the old man, and put on the new man, who is created in justice, holiness, and truth" (*Eph.* iv. 22).

10. *Home Life.*

Home life consists of our conduct in the family circle. The qualities that contribute to its happiness are sincerity, charity, cheerfulness, cordiality, patience, and a spirit of sacrifice.

There is a profound attachment in every heart for that sacred spot we call Home. It is enshrined in the fondest memories of our earlier days. Though the lapse of time may have changed our abode, our home is always the place where those dwell whom we love and trust, our safe retreat from an unsympathetic world, the reward of our labor and sacrifice, and the natural source of our energy and strength.

In the struggle and conflict of daily life we may be forced to put on an exterior reserve and retire into our inner selves to preserve peace of mind and heart. But at home, if our interior be unselfish, we may safely lay aside all reserve and enjoy the peace of security and familiar intercourse with our own.

11. *Recreation.*

Recreation is relaxation after the strain and strife of duty. It is necessary to relax and renew our energies from time to time, if we are to bear the burdens that await us. Three things may be remarked in regard to our recreations.

(1) Recreation should be an innocent relaxation, suited to our age and station in life. For some it may take the form of physical exercise, for others a social visit with friends may be more profitable, while a third class may find sufficient recreation in a change of occupation.

(2) To balance the mind recreation should be taken with moderation. Over-indulgence will dissipate instead of recreating our energies, while a want of recreation will make us dull and mechanical.

(3) Congenial surroundings contribute very much to our recreation. Under normal circumstances the home is the best place for our recreations, though on special occasions we may take our recreation away from home without injuring home life.

12. *Care of Health.*

Life and health are gifts of God. In bestowing them upon us He also imposed the obli-

gation of caring for our health and thereby prolonging life. Both extremes should be avoided in fulfilling this obligation. "Be not solicitous therefore," warns the Saviour, "saying, What shall we eat: or, what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed?" (*Matt.* vi. 31).

On the other hand St. Paul says: "Know you not that you are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 *Cor.* iii. 16). We would manifest an inordinate care of health (1) by unnecessarily thinking, talking, and worrying about it; (2) by developing fads and eccentricities in caring for it; (3) by neglecting our duty on account of it; (4) by being more solicitous about the body than about the soul.

We would be wanting in the proper care of our health (1) if we did something positively to injure it; (2) if we did not use the ordinary means of preserving it; (3) if we wantonly exposed it to danger; (4) if we refused medical aid when sick.

13. *Friends.*

Friends are persons who cherish a mutual attachment and have one another's welfare at

heart. Affability, cheerfulness, and integrity give our intercourse with acquaintances that flavor which enables us to make friends. Thinking of them with affection, trusting them cordially, and doing them a favor whenever the opportunity presents itself, enables us to cement the bonds of friendship.

We should (1) be careful in the selection of our friends; (2) have but a few; (3) be faithful to them unto death; (4) gladly make their interest our own. Listen to the advice of Sacred Scripture: "Be at peace with many, but let one of a thousand be thy counselor. If thou wouldst get a friend, try him before thou takest him, and do not credit him easily. For there is a friend of his own occasion, and he will not abide in the day of trouble. And there is a friend that turneth to enmity; and there is a friend that will disclose hatred and strife and reproaches. And there is a friend a companion at thy table, and he will not abide in the day of distress. A friend if he continue steadfast, shall be to thee as thyself, and shall act with confidence in thy household. A faithful friend is a strong defense: and he that hath found him, hath found a treasure. Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend, and no weight of gold or silver is able to countervail

the goodness of his fidelity. A faithful friend is the medicine of life and immortality; and they that fear the Lord shall find him. He that feareth God shall likewise have good friendship; because according to him shall also his friend be" (*Eccles.* vi. 6-17).

14. *Catholic Spirit.*

A Catholic spirit makes us loyal children of God. This spirit is made of four things: (1) Catholic views, which harmonize not only with dogmatic teaching, but also with the opinions of our ecclesiastical superiors; (2) Catholic desires, desires for the glory of God, the welfare of His Church, and for the temporal and eternal happiness of mankind; (3) a Catholic instinct which identifies us so intimately with Jesus Christ that it readily detects and abhors whatever is foreign to His spirit; (4) a Catholic life, a life actuated so completely by the teaching of the Catholic Church that it devoutly spends itself in the faithful discharge of its Christian duties.

A Catholic spirit (1) makes us living, active members of Christ's mystical body on earth by identifying us with the congregation in which we live; (2) it gives us the true liberty and peace of children of God; (3) and it enables

us to exercise a most powerful influence for the good of the community.

To acquire a Catholic spirit we must cultivate humility, docility, generosity, and fervor in the service of God.

15. *Intercourse with the World.*

On earth the children of God must have more or less intercourse with the people of the world. To guard them against injury and scandal in these dealings with mankind the Saviour gave His followers a practical rule of conduct when He said: "Be ye wise as serpents and simple as doves" (*Matt.* x. 16). We must be wise or prudent without being crafty, and charitable without being foolish. To exercise this prudence we must avoid all rash judgments, words, and actions on the one hand, and on the other give no one our trust or confidence till they have shown themselves worthy of it. "Separate thyself from thy enemies, and take heed of thy friends" (*Eccles.* vi. 13). We are simple as doves when (1) we do nothing in look, word, or deed to deceive our neighbor; (2) when we edify him by our self-possession, and by the integrity of our speech and deportment; (3) and especially by our forebearance and Christian charity.

To avoid the dissipation of the world we should therefore (1) not appear among the people of the world without a reason; (2) guard against the principles, maxims, standards, and motives of the world; (3) guard against injuring others in any way; (4) let the light of our good example shine in the darkness of the world; (5) avail ourselves of every opportunity of converting the world to Jesus Christ.

16. *Christian Charity.*

Christian charity is that divine virtue whereby we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. The infallible test of Christian charity is our charity towards our neighbor. The noblest acts of fraternal charity are summed up in the Seven Corporal, and the Seven Spiritual Works of Mercy.

The Corporal Works of Mercy are: (1) to feed the hungry; (2) to give drink to the thirsty; (3) to clothe the naked; (4) to ransom the captive; (5) to harbor the harborless; (6) to visit the sick; (7) to bury the dead.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are: (1) to admonish the sinner; (2) to instruct the ignorant; (3) to counsel the doubtful; (4) to comfort the sorrowful; (5) to bear wrongs pa-

tiently; (6) to forgive all injuries; (7) to pray for the living and the dead.

St. Thomas calls mercy the greatest of the moral virtues. And our divine Saviour Himself declares that at the general judgment He will pronounce sentence upon mankind according to the works of mercy they have performed.

"Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (*Matt.* xxv. 40). Hence St. Paul, so zealous in the cause of his Master, exhorted his converts: "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy" (*Col.* iii. 12).

17. *Patriotism.*

Patriotism is love for one's native or adopted country. It was implanted in the human heart by God when He made man a social being.

Patriotism manifests itself (1) in an esteem of one's country; (2) in attachment to it; (3) in the observance of its just laws; (4) in furthering the general welfare by one's influence, especially by a conscientious use of the ballot; (6) in serving one's country faithfully; (7) and in dying for one's country if circumstances require it.

V. SUBJUGATION OF THE EXTERNAL SENSES.

By following their senses instead of regulating their conduct according to the word of God, our first parents lost happiness and brought sin and misery into the world. In consequence of their sensuality human nature inclines to evil, the world allures to sin, and Satan has grown astute in tempting mankind.

Before us stand the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The spirit inclines to the former, the flesh to the latter. As we obtain knowledge primarily through the senses, St. Augustine aptly calls them "the doors by which life and death enter the soul." If we do not wish death to enter our souls through the senses we must keep them so completely under the control of reason enlightened by faith that we can turn them instinctively from any unforeseen danger and concentrate them on what is conducive to life eternal.

This subjugation of the senses, says Thomas à Kempis, purifies the heart, gives peace to the soul, and inclines the will to devotion. By subjugating our senses in a Christian spirit we offer them as holocausts to the Lord on the altar of repentant and purified love.

1. *Custody of the Eyes.*

The most numerous and the most lasting impressions made on the soul usually enter through the sense of sight. To cultivate purity of heart it will therefore be necessary to exercise specially custody of the eyes. Without doing anything extravagant or ridiculous this can easily be accomplished by those who keep the Christian ideal constantly before their minds and are determined to attain it in their daily lives. In all things let them (1) act from principle and guard against natural impulse; (2) watch and pray that they may enjoy the special protection of Divine Providence; (3) conquer fickleness of heart by cultivating a tender conscience; (4) not fix their gaze on a person of the opposite sex that might easily incite them to impure thoughts or desires; (5) avoid suggestive books, pictures, and plays; (6) guard against idle curiosity; (7) and by the contemplation of the beauties of nature learn to raise their minds and hearts to God.

2. *Custody of the Ears.*

Countless souls have been harmed by listening with pleasure to the vanities and wickedness of the world. If we do not wish to be

imbued with false principles and desire to preserve our hearts undefiled, we must turn away from (1) all irreligious and immodest conversation; (2) from all uncharitable remarks and criticism; (3) from all idle gossip, especially with persons of the opposite sex; (4) and from all sensational rumors and idle reports.

Let us rather treasure these sayings of the saints: (1) Turn instantly from the immodest tongue lest it defile you (St. Gregory Nazianzen). (2) Four things are becoming to the listener: to listen patiently, to weigh wisely, to report the good, and to forget the rest (St. Thomas). (3) The more you relish spiritual things, the easier will you escape the poison of an evil tongue. (4) Three things defile the hearing: boastful words, detracting remarks, and vain flattery (St. Anthony). (5) Whatever pertains to the salvation of our souls should be willingly heard, devoutly received, and carefully preserved (St. Bernard).

3. *Custody of the Sense of Smell.*

The use of perfumes is unbecoming to devout souls. When habitually indulged in it tends to moral effeminacy. Hence St. Bonaventure exhorts his readers to dispense with the per-

fumes of earth, and to fill their lives with the fragrance of virtue, that they may abound in the dew of heavenly grace, in the scented air of holy aspirations, and in the burning fire of divine charity. By exhaling the odor of virtue in their private lives the children of God will counteract evil, be an incentive to good, and give glory to God.

4. *Custody of the Taste.*

An unmortified taste is most pernicious, especially in this age of materialism and sensuality. Two evils result from a want of mortifying the taste: (1) the vices of gluttony and intemperance; (2) and a perversion of the sense of taste and of the craving for nourishment. According to St. Gregory the Great we may be intemperate in eating and drinking in five ways: (1) by eating or drinking out of season; (2) by desiring expensive food or drink; (3) by desiring things prepared with great care; (4) by too great eagerness in eating or drinking; (5) by an inordinate use of food or drink.

To exercise custody over the taste we should (1) be indifferent to food and drink, and take what is placed before us; (2) not take nourishment out of meal-time without necessity; (3)

take nourishment to strengthen our bodies and not merely to gratify the palate; (4) always observe moderation in eating and drinking; (5) when at table always deny ourselves something for the love of God.

5. *Custody of the Sense of Touch.*

The sense of touch is not easily kept under the control of reason (1) because it seems so harmless that often not sufficient attention is paid to it; (2) it covers the entire body and is not easily subjugated; (3) it easily excites impure feelings.

To subjugate the sense of touch we must avoid whatever enervates it. Hence the saints advise us: (1) to live a simple life; (2) to wear plain clothes; (3) to sleep on a hard bed; (4) to cultivate habits of industry; (5) to suffer the inclemency of the weather patiently; (6) never to pamper the body; (7) to avoid all unnecessary physical contact with others; (8) to be modest with ourselves; (9) to practise some austerity with the advice of our director.

6. *Custody of the Tongue.*

Though the tongue is not a sense it is appropriately treated here as the organ of speech. God gave us the gift of speech to worship Him, and to communicate with our neighbor in a

Christian manner. A right use of the tongue is made (1) in honoring God by prayer and divine praise; (2) in communicating with a neighbor in justice and kindness on business, social, and charitable affairs; (3) especially by consoling the unfortunate, in speaking well of all, in conversing on edifying subjects. But a wrong use of the tongue is made by all irreverent, disrespectful, uncharitable, and indelicate remarks.

We exercise a custody over the tongue (1) by always thinking well of all; (2) by always wishing well to all; (3) by repressing all impetuosity to speak; (4) by weighing what we are about to say, so that we speak in season and offend not against modesty, charity, justice, or truth. St. Alphonsus exhorts us to speak with simplicity, humility, moderation, and modesty. And the Psalmist prayed the Lord "to set a watch before his mouth; and a door around his lips that his heart incline not to evil words" (*Ps.* cxl. 3).

VI. SUBJUGATION OF THE INTERNAL SENSES.

1. *Controlling the Central Sense.*

The central sense makes us conscious of the operations of the external senses. Its subju-

gation consists in guarding against the two extremes of sense-consciousness, lethargy, and sensitiveness. A good will ought to turn instantly from any dangerous impression on the one hand, and, by distinguishing between impression and consent, have no grounds for vain fears on the other hand. We should turn as promptly from moral evil as we instinctively recoil from physical pain; but over-sensitiveness is founded neither on reason nor on faith, and retards our progress by paralyzing our energies.

2. *Purifying the Imagination.*

The imagination receives and reproduces the impressions made on the external senses. Though the first impressions, called phantasms, are usually vague and indistinct, their reproduction and elaboration may be brought out clearly by a reflex action of the will. The subjugation of the imagination consists in preserving and purifying it from all sinful and dangerous impressions. To attain this end we must guard against idle, dangerous, and sinful impressions, and try to forget the dangerous ones we have received. Hence we should (1) not permit the imagination to roam aimlessly; (2) not excite it uselessly; (3) not permit it

to dwell too much on worldly things; (4) not over-indulge it even on indifferent subjects; (5) not believe it too readily; (6) not blame it for our levity, impatience, or laziness; (7) but constrain it gently to become preoccupied with useful and devotional subjects.

3. *Restraining the Instinct.*

The instinct perceives what is conducive and what is harmful to animal life. It impels man, says St. Bernard, to seek his ease, his comfort, and especially his carnal gratification. The baser the passion it arouses, the more violent also is its impulse.

To subdue the instinct we must (1) guard against impressions that may arouse wicked suggestions; (2) energetically subdue those we can not avoid; (3) guard against the gratification of idle curiosity; (4) deny ourselves in some things lawful; (5) strengthen ourselves by recollection and prayer; (6) obey our spiritual director; (7) never grow discouraged in the conflict; (8) and never imagine ourselves immune from the assaults of the flesh.

4. *Purifying the Memory.*

The memory retains and identifies past impressions. The voluntary reproduction of

these impressions in man is called reminiscence, while the retention and reproduction of past thoughts is the work of the mind.

We subjugate the memory by purifying it of impressions that are dangerous to virtue, or that hamper us in concentrating our energies on elevating and useful things. To succeed we must (1) avoid sinful occasions and association; (2) not recall in too vivid a manner the memory of past sins; (3) forget injuries received; (4) cultivate detachment from earthly things; (5) not dwell too frequently or too fondly on the pleasant recollections of life.

To succeed we should (1) cherish the benefits of creation, redemption, and sanctification; (2) think of the wants of the Church and of the trials of the Holy Father; (3) remember the sad condition of sinners, the poverty of the poor, and the suffering of the sick; (4) often recall our own humble origin, our obligations and infidelities, the shortness of life, the value of grace, the certainty of death and of judgment, the suffering of the souls in purgatory, the terrors of hell, and the beatitude of heaven.

The benefits we derive from this subjugation of the memory are: (1) tranquillity and peace of heart; (2) purity of conscience; (3) freedom from countless temptations; (4) the spe-

cial protection of Divine Providence; (5) the inspiration of grace; (6) the special guidance of the Holy Ghost.

VII. SUBJUGATION OF THE SENSITIVE APPETITE OR OF THE PASSIONS.

The sensitive appetite is the faculty which tends towards the good and from the evil discovered by the instinct. This inclination of the sensitive appetite is called feeling or passion. St. Thomas enumerates eleven passions: love, hatred, desire, aversion, joy, sadness, hope, despair, courage, fear, and anger. Though indifferent in themselves, the passions strongly tend to evil on account of the corruption of human nature. When violently aroused they hamper the judgment of the mind and shackle the freedom of the will. When aroused and directed by a reflex action of the will, the passions are called emotions. As such they powerfully second the efforts of the will for good and for evil.

The passions are the battlefield on which the fiercest conflicts between the flesh and the spirit take place. "Here," says St. Augustine, "pride is opposed to humility, vain-glory to the fear of the Lord, hypocrisy to true devotion, contempt

to submission, envy to fraternal congratulation, hatred to love, detraction to fraternal correction, anger to patience, impertinence to meekness, insult to satisfaction, a worldly spirit to spiritual joy, sloth to the practice of virtue, vagrancy to stability, despair to confidence in God, cupidity to contempt of the world, hardness of heart to mercy, fraud and theft to innocence of life, lies and deception to truth, intemperance to moderation, immoderate rejoicing to sorrow for sin, an unbridled tongue to discretion and silence, impurity to carnal integrity, sensual desires to purity of heart, and worldly desires to the longing for heaven."

1. *Love.*

As a passion love is complacency in what is pleasing to the senses. It prompts us to seek whatever is agreeable to the senses, to possess it, to enjoy it, and to make ourselves secure in its possession and fruition. To subjugate this carnal love we must (1) turn it from sinful objects; (2) moderate it by the virtue of temperance; (3) center our affections more and more in God; (4) practise a holy indifference to earthly things; (5) and guard against excessive attachment to relatives and friends.

2. *Hatred.*

Hatred is a natural repugnance for everything disagreeable to the senses. As children of God we may hate only what is absolutely evil, as sin, hell, Satan, and the reprobate. To conquer our repugnance for other things we should (1) watch over our antipathies, lest they develop into passion; (2) guard against blind zeal which might lead us to offend against charity by unjust criticism; (3) beware of discord in matters of mere opinion; (4) cure hatred by the antidote of Christian charity.

3. *Desire.*

The passion of desire is a longing of the sensitive appetite for an obtainable good. It may be kept in subjection (1) by having but few material wants; (2) by not desiring these inordinately; (3) by turning our desires to virtuous objects; (4) and especially by moderating them according to the will of God in all things. In fact, the more we seek the will of God in all things, the easier will we dispel the countless vain fears that disquiet the human heart and fill it with disappointment. "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (*Ps.* liv. 23).

4. *Aversion.*

Aversion is the turning away of the sensitive appetite from whatever is repugnant to the senses. Christians should school themselves to turn instinctively from sin and its occasions and dangers, but courageously embrace whatever is good for their souls, no matter how repugnant it may be to human nature. Hence we should (1) not be over-solicitous about our health, much less about our feelings; (2) shun the vanities of the world; (3) beware of injuring justice or charity on account of some inconvenience.

5. *Joy or Delight.*

The passion of joy or delight is fruition of something agreeable to the senses. To keep this passion in subjection we must (1) turn with decision from all unlawful enjoyment; (2) use things lawful with moderation; (3) practise voluntary self-denial; (4) aim to content ourselves with what is necessary; (5) not indulge in harmless pleasures unbecoming our station in life.

6. *Sadness.*

As a passion sadness is an affliction and perturbation of the sensitive appetite caused by a

disagreeable impression on the senses. Sadness or sorrow has a depressing effect on the body, and exercises a paralyzing influence on the energies of the soul. By showing us the emptiness of earthly things, they exercise a chastening influence on our lives and dispose us for the grace of God.

The natural remedies for sorrow or sadness are: (1) tears, as an outpouring of our sorrow; (2) a busy life to forget it; (3) self-restraint to control it; (4) delight in the agreeable things of life; (5) the sympathy of friends; (6) the contemplation of the truths of religion; (7) nourishment to counteract the depression of the physical powers.

To moderate excessive sadness we should besides (1) pray and receive the sacraments; (2) make frequent acts of conformity to God's holy will; (3) purify our consciences; (4) try to possess our souls in patience.

In conclusion let us recall a few sayings of the saints. Sorrow for sin is grief divine (St. Jerome). He easily conquers sorrow who has no love for earthly things (à Kempis). Do not seek motives to strengthen your sorrow but to dispel it (St. Gregory). A good conscience bears sorrow lightly (St. Isadore). Tears of contrition are messengers of joy (St. John

Chrysostom). Occupation helps the sorrowful to forget their woes (St. Bonaventure). A servant of God should not appear with a sad countenance (St. Francis Assisi). As moths destroy a garment, so sadness injures the heart (St. Bernard).

7. *Hope.*

As a passion hope is a longing of the sensitive appetite for something difficult but possible to attain. Hope is begotten by love, derives its confidence from experience, is sustained by desire, and rewarded by enjoyment. To elevate the passion of hope to the supernatural plane we must (1) not be inordinately solicitous about "what we shall eat; or what we shall drink, or wherewith we shall be clothed" (*Matt.* vi. 31); (2) "seek the kingdom of God and His justice" (*Matt.* vi. 33); (3) "confide in the Lord rather than have confidence in man" (*Ps.* cxvii. 8); (4) center our affections in God; (5) look to God alone for appreciation and reward.

8. *Despair.*

Despair is the turning away of the sensitive appetite from a desirable object that is considered unattainable. It is founded on desire, and opposed to hope.

In persons of a phlegmatic temperament laziness often passes for despair; in persons of a bilious temperament, sadness; in persons of a choleric temperament, impatience; and in persons of a nervous temperament, humiliation arising from previous failure.

The passion of despair may be moderated (1) by indifference to human affairs; (2) by concentrating our affections on the treasures of grace; (3) by guarding against faint-heartedness; (4) by putting our trust in God; (5) by serving Him with a generous spirit.

9. *Courage.*

Courage is the passion which repels a serious threatening evil. To spiritualize it we should (1) be courageous in conquering our faults; (2) govern our physical courage by Christian fortitude; (3) realize that we are under the protection of Providence; (4) trust to do our duty with His divine aid; (5) in difficult matters we should not trust our own judgment; (6) in temptations to impurity courage consists in instant flight.

10. *Fear.*

Fear is the prostration of the sensitive appetite caused by a threatening evil. Fear mani-

fests itself in six ways: (1) as laziness or fear of work; (2) as bashful deportment; (3) as evidence of a guilty conscience; (4) in wonder, when in the presence of overwhelming evil; (5) in stupor, when in the presence of an extraordinary danger; (6) in agony at the sudden and unexpected appearance of a great danger.

Fear collects our energies for resistance and makes us conciliatory and cautious in adopting the proper means to attain our end. In moderating it we must (1) ever make the fear of the Lord outweigh the combined influence of human respect and mundane fear; (2) fear the greater evils most; (3) practise resignation to God's will; (4) trust in His never-failing aid; (5) never excuse ourselves from doing good under the pretext of humility; (6) guard against presumption and despair, and so walk steadfastly in the fear of the Lord. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (*Prov.* i. 7).

11. *Anger.*

Anger is a feeling of displeasure united to a desire for revenge. When the sensitive appetite is impressed by an evil, it either succumbs

to it through sadness, or it turns on the evil and retaliates by anger. Anger is a mixture of hatred of the evil inflicted, of sadness at its reception, and of desire and hope of conquering and punishing it.

Anger may be aroused by anything that humbles our self-esteem, wounds our self-love, or thwarts our self-will. It may manifest itself as (1) indignation, which remains under the control of reason and easily subsides; (2) as animosity, which is cherished in the memory for a long time; (3) and as fury, which does not subside until it has taken revenge.

To control anger it is above all necessary (1) to practise humility, because pride is always at the bottom of anger; (2) to resist the first impulse to anger; (3) to keep silence when provoked and resolve not to act on the spur of the moment; (4) to remember that often no injury or insult was intended; (5) to consider the example of Jesus; (6) to practise meekness; (7) to think of the injury you do to yourself and the scandal you may give by anger; (8) to combine the motives of reason and faith by keeping silence when angry, by offering the injury to God and suffering it in patience. Then, thank God for the occasion of self-conquest and the vic-

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tory, and pray for the one who has injured you. "Be not quickly angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of a fool" (*Eccles.* vii. 10).

VIII. SUBJUGATION OF THE WILL.

The will or rational appetite is the power of exercising dominion over our own actions. This dominion should be exercised according to the dictates of reason enlightened by faith. Unfortunately, it is too frequently influenced by passion in daily life. By the subjugation of the will we therefore mean constraining ourselves to act in accordance with Christian reason.

All that has thus far been said on self-denial applies more or less to the will, which should govern all our actions. To enable it to do this we must detach it from riches, comforts, and pleasures, from inordinate attachment to relatives and friends, and from honors, self-esteem, and self-will.

1. *Detachment from Riches.*

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Our Saviour declared in His sermon on the Mount. No matter what our vocation or station in life may be, we must

be poor in spirit, or detached from the things of the world, to have hope of life everlasting. The young man in the Gospel, who asked Jesus what he must do to attain life everlasting, was given to understand that a rich man "shall hardly enter the kingdom of heaven" (*Matt.* xix. 23). The things of earth are intended by God to serve us as stepping-stones on which to ascend to heaven. By cultivating attachment to them we become covetous and avaricious, pervert the divine order, and give them the place of God in our hearts. As children of God we dare let nothing come between Him and ourselves. Hence the Saviour exhorts us, saying: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (*Matt.* vi. 33).

2. *Detachment from Comforts.*

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head"(*Matt.* viii. 20). As pilgrims on our way to eternity we may enjoy the comforts of our station in life without forfeiting our claim to heaven. But to be attached to the comforts of life is not merely childish and enervating, but may be very sinful and even subversive of our temporal happiness. Attach-

ments multiply our wants and cares and lead to bitter disappointments.

3. *Detachment from Pleasures.*

As worldly pleasures usually consist in the gratification of the senses, we must deny ourselves many of them and detach our hearts from all of them to be true followers of Jesus Christ. There are pleasures on earth that are divine, and should be the object of our solicitude. To possess the truth, to do the right, to practise religion, to follow our vocation, to be at peace with God and man, and to do God's holy will, give a pleasure that is a foretaste of heaven. Even some pleasures arising from the gratification of the senses, as lawful recreation and relaxation, are perfectly legitimate as long as we do not form an inordinate attachment to them. But to dissipate both time and energy in the pursuit of pleasure is a deification of the carnal man and a foolish search for heaven on earth.

4. *Detachment from Relatives and Friends.*

Relatives and friends are bound to us by bonds which we should respect and cherish. But we are bound more intimately to God our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and so

should not permit love for relatives and friends to come between us and Him. Such love would be that inordinate attachment which Jesus condemned when He said: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me" (*Matt.* x. 37).

5. *Detachment from Honors.*

Honor is a tribute to excellence and a reward of virtue. There is an excellence of person, an excellence of appearance, an excellence of position, and an excellence of achievement. The excellence of person is founded on birth, age, constitution, talent, and education of an individual. The excellence of appearance is founded on physical charms, polished manners, and fine clothes; while the excellence of position rests on the prominence a person occupies in social, commercial, political, or religious affairs. Man's strongest personal claim to honor is the excellence of achievement, especially when attained under adverse circumstances, for the excellence of person, of appearance, and of position result primarily from the gifts of Providence.

Man may seek honor by doing things to win the applause of the world, or by seeking to please God in all things and referring all honor to

Him. As Christians we must be detached from the honors of the world, not seek them, be indifferent to them, and refer them to God when thrust upon us. If, then, we do great things to glorify God and benefit mankind, we may rest assured that God Himself will honor us by being our "reward exceeding great" (*Gen.* xv. 1).

6. *Detachment from Self-Esteem.*

Self-esteem consists in paying tribute to our own excellence. In the natural order, and especially in the order of grace, our excellence is primarily the work of God. We are His instruments. Sin alone is our work, and, as sin degrades and brands us with infamy, we have no excellence independently of God. Unless we, therefore, say with St. Paul: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 *Cor.* xv. 10), we are robbing God when we pay tribute to our own excellence. If we esteem ourselves in our own mind, we are proud. If we manifest our pride in trivial things, we are vain; if in serious affairs, we are ambitious of the applause of the world.

We should, indeed, esteem ourselves as the noblest creatures of God on earth, as the brethren of Christ and coheirs with Him to the king-

dom of heaven, and strive to make ourselves worthy of our sublime destiny. But every esteem contrary to, or not subordinated to our Christian dignity is carnal, worldly, and sinful. Hence we must practise detachment from all inordinate self-esteem, before we can honestly say with the Apostle of the Gentiles, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (*Phil.* iv. 13).

7. *Detachment from Self-Love.*

Self-love is the affection man has for himself, though the term is more frequently applied to that inordinate love of self whereby he makes himself the object of his affections. It is in this latter sense that the masters of the spiritual life condemn self-love. We love ourselves rightly as long as we seek the will of God in all things. In proportion as we go beyond that we deify ourselves by putting ourselves before God. As Christians we must, therefore, practise detachment from inordinate self-love. To stimulate us in this practice we shall call some of the sayings of the saints to mind. "From self-love arise simulation, hardness of heart, infidelity, hypocrisy, singularity, idle complacency, disobedience, rebellion, contention, pertinacity, and the like." (St. Dennis.) "Self-

love causes spiritual blindness." "He loves himself well who loves the works of God in himself." (St. Prosper.) "By tepidity the love of God and our neighbor is degraded into self-love." (Card. Hugo.) "The love of God will increase in you in proportion as you decrease self-love." (Blosius.) "Love yourself in God, for God, and to possess God, and you will kill self-love." (St. Augustine.) "He loves others inordinately who deceives others to hide his fault." (St. Augustine.)

8. *Detachment from Self-Will.*

Self-will is the inclination to do our own will. On account of the corruption of human nature self-will is usually opposed to the will of God and is defined as such by spiritual writers. As heaven is the reward for doing God's will, detachment is necessary for all. Children must renounce their will to obey their parents; citizens, to abide by the law of the land; and Christians, to become worthy brethren of Christ. Those, however, who seek perfection, must make the holy will of God their own in all things before they can say with Christ, "I do always the things that please Him" (*John* viii. 29). In fact, in proportion as we do God's will we work for heaven, and in proportion as we do

our own will we have our reward in its gratification. "Why have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded; why have we humbled our souls, and thou hast not taken notice? Behold, in the day of your fast your own will is found" (*Is.* lviii. 3).

The gratification of self-will (1) exposes us to delusions; (2) leads to disquietude; (3) is the greatest obstacle to perfection; (4) exposes us to the temptations of Satan; (5) and robs us of merit.

Detachment from self-will, on the other hand, (1) enables us to find the will of God; (2) is the first step in the spiritual life; (3) is the rule of perfection; (4) gives peace and security; (5) transforms us into true Christians; (6) multiplies our merit; (7) and assures us of the reward of heaven.

Let us, then, fulfil the law, obey our lawful superiors, be guided in doubtful affairs by our spiritual director, and practise indifference to all things but the holy will of God.

IX. SUBJUGATION OF THE MIND TO TRUTH.

1. *Removal of Ignorance.*

Ignorance is a want of knowledge. It is always a misfortune and often a fault. To re-

move ignorance from our minds, we (1) must sincerely desire the truth, no matter how humiliating it may be, or how great a sacrifice it may demand of us; (2) we must seek it by systematic, persevering study; (3) we must pray to God for light and grace to dispel the darkness of our minds, to steady our mental vision, and to enable us to grasp the truth in all its details.

2. *Removal of Prejudice.*

Prejudice is a bias of the mind in favor of the similitude of a truth, or the rectitude of a judgment. It is caused by a misconception of truth, by passion, or by perverseness of the will. Prejudice is not only detrimental to fraternal charity and subversive of good government, but has also done much harm to souls by keeping them from embracing the true religion or from the practice of solid virtue. It is dispelled by removing its cause, that is, by dispelling error, by subjugating the passions, and by purifying the desires of the heart.

3. *Removal of Error.*

Error is a misapprehension of a truth or of its application. It may result from ignorance, prejudice, a defective judgment, or from per-

verted self-love. Positive error is worse than ignorance and more difficult to dispel. Possessing the appearance of truth, it easily lulls the mind into a false security, and, by flattering the passions, easily leads man to serious excess.

An humble mistrust of the accuracy of our perception or judgment is the first step towards the removal of error. If, then, we have the good will to seek the truth in an impartial manner, and pray to God for light to see it and strength to bear it, we shall not only be freed from error but also rejoice in the possession of the truth.

4. *Cure of Spiritual Blindness.*

Spiritual blindness is darkness in the mind caused by infidelity to grace. As light is necessary for perception in the physical order, so grace is indispensable in the spiritual order. By infidelity to grace we turn away from God, the eternal Light, and live a selfish, worldly life that gradually becomes more and more enveloped in spiritual darkness.

As spiritual blindness is caused by a perverse will we must acquire the fear of the Lord, by meditating seriously on the eternal truths, to cure it. In proportion as the fear of the Lord softens our hearts and converts our wills, will

our minds also reapproach God, and, in the light of His grace, perceive the malice of our sins, the danger we were in of losing our souls, as well as the infinite mercy of God towards us.

5. *Dismissal of False Principles.*

A false principle is a rule of action founded on a misconception of the truth. Truth is objective, eternal, and immutable. To view it correctly we must regard it in the light of faith, that is, from the true, eternal, immutable standpoint of almighty God. Every other view will give us a misconception of the truth. Hence to view it from the false, temporal, mutable standpoint of the flesh, the world, or the devil, gives us an unreal perspective of the truth, which begets error and prejudice in the mind. If, then, we generalize error or prejudice as fundamental truths, or make them the basis of a rule of action, we form false principles.

As the normal mind is influenced only by the evidence of truth, we must first obtain a correct perception of the truth in question before we can reasonably dismiss a false principle. This correct perception of the truth will force us to dismiss the false principle by dispelling the darkness or error and prejudice on which it rests.

6. *Restoration of the Mind.*

Restoration of the mind consists in qualifying it for the perception and use of truth. This restoration is necessary to undo the effects of original and actual sin on the mind itself.

These are five effects of sin on the human mind:

(1) The perception of man's mental vision is obscured. Before sin came into the world man could bask in the sunshine of God's truth. Now he must grope his way through the mists of ignorance, prejudice, and error, guided mainly by the obscure light of faith.

(2) The range of man's mental vision is narrowed. Before he was defiled by sin, man enjoyed the full liberty of a child of God. Now, like a child at a keyhole or a fugitive in a cave, he can see only what appears on his limited horizon.

(3) The power of man's mental vision is weakened. Before the blight of sin descended upon him, man could penetrate hidden mysteries. Now his vision is so poor that he can grasp only a few rudimentary truths after long and weary application.

(4) The correctness of man's mental vision is impaired. Like an astigmatic eye in

which the rays of light do not properly converge, the light of reason and the light of faith easily seem at variance to man since his nature was corrupted by sin.

(5) Finally, the mind of man is often influenced by self-love and self-will since it was weakened by sin. Before sin came into the world the mind ruled all man's actions. Now, like a weak ruler of rebellious subjects, it makes many a degrading compromise with the rebellious will spurred on by the passions.

To restore his mind even partially man must purge himself of conceit and selfishness, pray humbly for divine guidance, and seriously concentrate his energies on what is most essential to his calling. By persevering efforts he will learn enough to appreciate the light of faith. If he follows this with docility through this vale of tears, his sincerity will finally be rewarded by a complete restoration and illumination of his mental vision in the splendor of the Beatific Vision.

7. *Curing Fickleness.*

Fickleness is a tendency of the mind to flit from one subject to another without any definite aim or intention. It results from a lightness of mind and a freedom from care or re-

sponsibility, which is the outgrowth of a satisfied selfish nature. If not remedied at an early stage by self-discipline and application it will crystallize into a shallow, selfish character.

8. *Remedying Curiosity.*

Curiosity is an inordinate tendency of the mind for novel and sensational information. It is the opposite of fickleness in application, but like it prompted rather by a perverse will than by a longing of the mind for truth. Curiosity can easily be converted into a spirit of study by turning the mind from sensational subjects and concentrating all its energy on necessary, useful, and elevating topics.

9. *Moderating Rashness.*

Rashness of mind is inordinate haste in the study of a truth, in pronouncing a judgment, or in the performance of an action. Undue haste in study is like bolting food without mastication, with similar pernicious effects. A rash judgment in addition usually offends against charity if not against justice, while a rash action is performed apparently with total oblivion or indifference to its injurious effects.

By moderating our impetuosity sufficiently to study a subject thoroughly, both in its nature

and application, we not only obtain a clear perception of it, but guard as well against defects in judgment and precipitation in action.

10. *Conquering Obstinacy.*

Obstinacy is an undue attachment to one's judgment or to one's mode of action. It is caused by narrow-mindedness and mental pride, and gives rise to rashness, harshness, and insubordination.

As this defect is evident to our associates before we admit even its possibility, we usually will not try to conquer it before it has been brought home to us by bitter humiliation. If then at least we have the good will to admit our fault and emerge from our narrow selfishness, we may yet gain a decisive victory over ourselves.

X. SUBJUGATION OF THE CREATURE TO THE CREATOR — USE OF THE MEANS OF GRACE.

All who sincerely desire to know and do God's will, both in regard to the choice of their vocation and the particular obligations of their state in life, have abundant means of grace to enable them to fulfil their part of the divine plan. For, not only does God wish the salvation of

all mankind, but He also does all He can, without depriving any one of his free-will, to bring all to life everlasting. God does not command impossibilities, says the Council of Trent, but by commanding admonishes both to do what we can and to pray for what we can not do: and then He will help us to do what we can not do of ourselves.

The merits of the Saviour and the mercy of God are, indeed, infinite, but we must *dispose* ourselves for His grace, by entering the state in life to which He has called us and assuming its obligations, and then *freely submit* ourselves to His influence by faithful use of the means of grace, before God will help us to work out our salvation.

As our souls vivify our bodies and enable them to act, so grace gives us spiritual life and enables us to practise every virtue. The means of obtaining grace, or freely submitting ourselves to God's influence is to cultivate an intimate union with Jesus Christ by prayer, the reception of the sacraments, participation in the Sacrifice of the Mass, pious use of the sacramentals, gaining indulgences, and cultivating pious practices approved by the Church. "I am the vine;" says Jesus, "you are the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him,

the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing" (*John* xv. 5).

1. *Prayer.*

Prayer is recourse to God for help. It always includes three things: the raising of the mind to God, the presenting of a petition, and a reason for invoking the divine aid.

We may raise our minds to God by an act of faith in His presence, or by imagining ourselves before His throne, or in the presence of Jesus or in the company of Mary, of the angels and saints.

Our request for help may be expressed in the form of a simple petition, which begs for a definite grace; in the form of a supplication, which begs for help in general; or in the form of an obsecration, which states the reason why the request should be granted. Our reasons for venturing to present our petitions for help are the holiness, goodness, mercy, and promises of God, the merits and promises of Our Saviour, the intercessory power of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the angels and saints, and the gratitude we have shown God for favors received.

According to St. Thomas piety and perseverance must characterize our prayer. Piety teaches us to mistrust ourselves in all humility

and place our confidence unreservedly in God, while perseverance keeps us praying for grace after grace until we finally receive the grace of perseverance, the grace of a holy death, and the crowning grace of the Beatific Vision.

Taken in this general sense of asking God's help, prayer is the universal means of submitting ourselves to the divine influence and of uniting ourselves to Jesus Christ. As such it is absolutely necessary for salvation. This truth is brought home to us very forcibly by St. Alphonsus, the Doctor of Prayer, when he says: "He that prays shall be saved: he that neglects prayer shall be lost."

a. Vocal Prayer. Vocal prayer is prayer expressed in words. Though no definite formula is necessary for vocal prayer, it is advisable to use the prayers approved by the Church to safeguard the piety of our prayer. Without piety, that is mistrust of self and confidence in God, the most profound sentiments that man could express would be emptiness if not arrogance in the sight of God.

The vocal prayers most essential to Catholic life are the Lord's Prayer, the Angelical Salutation, the Doxology, and the Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Contrition.

Ejaculatory prayer is an efficacious means of

invoking the divine aid in time of temptation, and of cultivating the habit of prayer during the busy hours of the day. It consists in fervently invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary, or in making other pious aspirations that keep us united to God.

The liturgical prayers of the Church are those recited by the clergy in the name of all the mystical members of Christ. They are found in the breviary, the missal and other official books of the Church.

b. Mental Prayer. Mental prayer is prayer of the mind and will without external words. In a wide sense it embraces all religious thoughts, desires, affections, and aspirations that man may have through life, as the result of reading spiritual books, hearing sermons, and association with pious persons. As such it enlightens the mind, disposes our hearts for the practice of virtue, and enables us to pray as we should. When understood in this sense, mental prayer is morally necessary for salvation, and indispensable to attain perfection. For on the one hand we can not realize our dangers without it, and on the other hand we will not make the necessary effort to please God without its stimulating influence. "With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is no

one that considereth in the heart" (*Jer.* xii. 11).

When considered in a restricted sense mental prayer was called active contemplation by ancient spiritual writers, but is usually called meditation in our day. Meditation is mental prayer reduced to a system. As such it consists of three things: (1) the introduction, a more or less formal appearance of the soul in the presence of God; (2) the meditation proper; (3) the conclusion, an humble and grateful withdrawal of the soul from the Divine Presence.

The meditation proper consists (1) in the acts of the mind contemplating a truth of religion, preferably one of the eternal truths, or some phase of the life and suffering of our divine Saviour, and applying the same to ourselves; (2) in heartfelt affections and prayers which have been aroused by the considerations and applications; (3) and which naturally terminate in a practical resolution of the will.

According to St. Alphonsus the affections and prayers are of the greatest importance. The affections we should elicit are especially acts of faith, of thanksgiving, of humility, of hope, of love, and of contrition. In our prayers or petitions we should seek light, humility, patience,

fraternal charity, a good death and eternal salvation, but above all the love of God and holy perseverance.

The resolution we should form should be (1) a general one to avoid evil and to do good; (2) a particular one to avoid some special evil or danger, or to practise some particular virtue. Fidelity to the practice of meditation, says St. Thomas, produces peace of mind, contempt of the world, desire of heaven, patient endurance, liberty of spirit, spiritual sweetness, increase of the love of God, and a happiness which is the foretaste of heaven.

c. Mixed Prayer. Mixed prayer is a union of vocal and mental prayer. Every vocal prayer may be made a mixed prayer with great profit to the soul by pausing at the words or sentiments that particularly appeal to us, to make appropriate affections.

The most popular mixed prayer we possess, however, is the Rosary, which unites the recitation of the most precious vocal prayers with considerations on the principal events in the life of Our Lord and His blessed Mother.

The Way of the Cross is another popular form of mixed prayer, which consists in the recitation of vocal prayers while meditating on the suffering and death of our divine Saviour.

2. *The Sacraments.*

Our divine Saviour instituted seven sacraments to give special grace. Two of these deserve special mention here as sacraments which are frequently received. They are Penance and Holy Communion.

As Penance is the sacrament of God's mercy, every Christian who enters the confessional with a contrite and humble heart, makes a good confession, and receives absolution, has the moral certainty of faith that his sins are forgiven. And he receives, in addition to absolution, reinstatement in his privileges as a child of God and heir to heaven and probably the recovery of the merits he possessed at the time he committed mortal sin.

Holy Communion is a most efficacious help to a devout and holy life. For in receiving Our Lord in the sacrament of His love we unite ourselves so intimately to Him, the source of life and strength, that we can easily avoid sin and its voluntary occasions, root the evil inclinations out of our hearts, and make progress in every virtue. In proportion, then, as we prepare ourselves devoutly for Holy Communion and devote a corresponding attention to our thanksgiving, we shall find the practice of fre-

quent Communion most beneficial for our souls.

3. *The Sacrifice of the Mass.*

Holy Mass is the unbloody renewal, continuation, perpetuation, and application of the sacrifice of Calvary. Here Jesus is ever "living to make intercession for us" (*Heb.* vii. 25). On our altars is daily fulfilled the prophecy of Malachy: "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My Name is great, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (*Mal.* i. 11). By assisting devoutly at holy Mass we participate in the sacrifice of the New Law, we unite ourselves so intimately to Jesus, our High Priest, that we can confidently ascend with Him to the very throne of God, and offer to the heavenly Father a more acceptable sacrifice of adoration, of thanksgiving, of reparation, and of prayer, than all the celestial hosts can offer, and we return laden with all the blessings that flow from Calvary's heights.

4. *The Sacramentals.*

The sacramentals are external acts of religion specially approved by the Church. The most common among them are the use of the holy name of Jesus, the use of the sign of the cross,

and the use of blessed articles of devotion, such as holy water, rosary beads, and the like. The sacramentals derive their special efficacy from the prayer of the universal Church, which is always acceptable to God. A devout use of sacramentals inclines us to the service of God, wards off the powers of darkness, and often is rewarded with material favors.

5. *Indulgences.*

To gain an indulgence we must say certain prayers or perform certain good works. Now, the Church has enriched all the prayers and good works that enter into a devout life with various indulgences. The desire to gain indulgences is, therefore, a twofold means of grace: (1) it applies the merits of the Saviour to us in the indulgence itself; (2) it is a great incentive to prayer and good works. Hence, as we must be free from mortal sin to gain a partial indulgence, and free from all voluntary attachment even for venial sin to gain a plenary indulgence, St. Alphonsus rightly says that the short cut to heaven is by way of indulgences.

6. *Pious Practices.*

All pious practices approved by the Church foster a spirit of prayer and devotion. Among those universally beneficial as means of grace

are attendance at daily Mass, frequent communion, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the Way of the Cross, the recitation of the rosary, the wearing of the scapulars, and the wearing of a blessed medal and of a crucifix.

The observance of the feasts and fasts of the year is no less a means of grace, than an indication of living in harmony with Christ and His Church.

Finally, devout membership in some religious society or confraternity can not be too urgently counseled as conducive to individual perfection and the edification of the community.

7. *Counsels on the Use of the Means of Grace.*

1. Earnest labor and patient endurance stimulate a healthy appetite both in the physical and spiritual order. We must therefore make an honest effort in the spiritual life to have a relish for grace. If, then, we make use of the means of grace, God will surely aid us to do what we can not do of ourselves.

2. As long as we are striving honestly to please God, we can not use the means of grace too freely; neither need we fear exhausting the supply of grace, for it is infinite.

3. If distractions crowd in upon us at times in spite of our attempt at recollection and de-

votion, let us rest assured that God is satisfied with our honest efforts and will hear our prayer.

4. Let us not look for sensible devotion in using the means of grace, much less discontinue our prayers and pious practices in consequence. Prayer is not supposed to be a selfish spiritual dissipation, but a cry to God for help.

5. The monotony of prayer and devotion can easily be broken by earnest struggle in God's service.

6. Weariness must be expected on the narrow way; but take courage, for we must crucify our natural selves before we become really spiritualized.

7. Fidelity to grace at one time does not confirm us in grace for life. We must, therefore, persevere in the use of the means of grace, if we hope to receive the grace of perseverance.

8. In all our devotions we should pray for ourselves, our relatives, and friends, for our benefactors and our enemies, for the innocent and for sinners, for the Holy Father, the Church, and the clergy, and for the holy souls in purgatory.

SECTION IV.

THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE OR ACTIVE ILLUMINATION.

"If any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (*Luke* ix. 23).

Our Saviour not only invites us to deny ourselves, but also to take up our daily cross. As self-denial consists in triumphing over ourselves and the world by self-discipline and prayer, so taking up our cross consists in the practice of every Christian virtue. By self-denial we clear the ground, by prayer we accept the plan of God for our spiritual edifice and obtain His aid, and by the practice of virtue we co-operate with God in the work of our sanctification.

Let us, therefore, consider the Practice of Virtue in General, and study the Theological Virtues and the Cardinal Virtues in detail.

I. THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE IN GENERAL.

1. *The Object in Practising Virtue — Spiritual Growth.*

As a gardener, who has laboriously prepared the soil and planted the seed, tills his

plants with great care that they may produce much fruit, so the Christian applies himself to the practice of virtue that he may grow in the spiritual life.

Every supernatural virtue has a divine and a human element. The divine element is the grace of God, the human, our co-operation with it. Grace is the efficient cause, the Christian's good will in the practice of virtue the proximate disposing cause of his spiritual progress.

To practise virtue and grow in the spiritual life we must (1) prevent the weeds of vice from sprouting in the garden of our hearts; (2) keep the soil pulverized by voluntary mortification; (3) nourish the plants of virtue by prayer and tears of penance; (4) work sedulously by availing ourselves of every opportunity of doing faithfully the little good we can.

2. *The Motive in Practising Virtue — Hope of Reward.*

"Behold your reward is great in heaven" (*Matt.* vi. 23). God holds out the hope of reward to spur on the Christian in the practice of virtue. Time is short. Life passes like a vapor. We brought nothing with us into the world, and we shall take only our works with us into eternity. In this world there is nothing

that can satiate the human heart. "Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity" (*Eccles.* i. 2). The Saviour therefore exhorts us to lay up "treasures in heaven; where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (*Matt.* vi. 20). We lay up treasures in heaven by the practice of virtue. There even the most trivial act of Christian virtue will receive an eternal reward according to the assurance of the Saviour: "whosoever shall give a cup of cold water in my name shall not lose his reward" (*Mark* ix. 40).

3. *Order in the Practice of Virtue.*

Order is essential to the success of every undertaking. It is doubly necessary to make progress in the spiritual life. On the one hand the virtues are numerous and varied, though intimately connected. On the other hand our energies are limited, even when at their best. By concentrating our energies on the principal virtues we make them the main supports of our spiritual edifice, and gradually complete it by the practice of all connecting virtues. By this concentration we make a right beginning, pursue an orderly course, and save ourselves from bewilderment and aimless work. Under such circumstances we may reasonably trust that

with the lapse of time grace will hasten our spiritual progress.

Of all the virtues in the spiritual life there are four, according to St. Bonaventure, that give vitality and permanence to the rest. "Faith gives them life, charity educates them, prudence governs them, and humility preserves them."

4. *Signs of Progress in Virtue.*

On our pilgrimage to heaven we must be guided by faith and so can not measure our progress in virtue with mathematical precision. Still, faith gives us both negative and positive signs of our progress. The negative signs are derived from our fidelity to the practice of self-denial, and the purity of heart we maintain. The positive signs of our progress in virtue are drawn (1) from the fervor with which we use the means of grace; (2) from the fidelity with which we perform our duties; (3) from the alacrity with which we seize an opportunity of doing good; (4) and from the facility we have acquired in the practice of virtue.

5. *Counsels on the Practice of Virtue.*

In the practice of virtue we should (1) be resigned to the dispensations of Providence in matters of health, talents, and trials of life; (2)

be tolerant of the conduct of others, even as we would have them be towards us; (3) be patient with ourselves, for virtues are plants of slow growth; (4) do the best we can and leave the success to God; (5) never weary of performing our duty conscientiously, no matter what others may do; (6) and rest assured that our real progress will be an agreeable surprise, and our fidelity our greatest consolation in eternity.

II. THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

"Now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity" (1 *Cor.* xiii. 13).

By uniting us directly to God each of the theological virtues exercises a fourfold influence in the spiritual life. Faith nourishes the mind, produces rectitude of life, prompts us in the service of God, and rewards us with eternal life. Hope imparts serenity of mind and gladness of heart, lightens our labors, and puts off old age. Charity prompts us to reverence God, to love our neighbor, to correct the erring, and to relieve the needy and the poor.

"The three powerful weapons by which we are armed in the spiritual life," says St. Anthony, "are the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, and the sword of charity."

1. *Faith.*

"Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and out of thy father's house, and come into the land which I shall show thee" (*Gen.* xii. 1). The words, which He spoke to Abraham of old, God addresses to every Christian soul by the virtue of faith. "Go forth from the world with its vanities and deception," He says to the soul, "do violence to your pride and self-love, and come into the land of liberty and grace. I have something better in store for you than this life can offer. Both your cradle and your grave are in the vestibule of eternity. I have therefore implanted in your heart a longing for an endless possession of an infinite good, which I intend to satiate. 'Give me thy heart. I will be thy reward exceeding great.' Here your choice is between poisonous pleasures or faithful service; there between eternal misery or a life of glory. As you sow so shall you reap."

Faith is defined as the virtue whereby we accept all that God has revealed and the Catholic Church teaches. By faith, then, we enter the land of divine truth, we serve a worthy Master, we are stimulated by the hope of a great reward. Relying on God's help, we are confident of success and look forward to the glory of the life to come.

The acts of faith are: (1) to believe all that

God has revealed and the Catholic Church teaches; (2) to profess this faith with our lips; (3) to confirm our profession with our works; (4) to make every sacrifice necessary, even to shed our blood for our faith; (5) to make the teaching of faith known to others; (6) and to defend it against the attacks of an ignorant and vicious world.

"To be the light, the ornament, and the strength of our lives, our faith should be founded on the bedrock of humility, firmly grasped by the mind, cherished by the heart, and resolutely practised by the will."

2. *Hope.*

Hope is the virtue by which we trust to receive life everlasting and the means necessary to attain it. "Hope," says St. Lawrence Justinian, "is the column which sustains our spiritual edifice."

Our hope at attaining eternal happiness rests primarily on the mercy, power and promises of God and the merits of our Saviour, secondarily on the intercessory power of the Blessed Virgin and of the angels and saints.

The principal acts of hope are: (1) the devout performance of our daily prayers; (2) prompt recourse to God in temptation; (3) con-

fidence in God proportionate to the difficulties that confront us; (4) interior aspirations in temptations; (5) invocation of the Mother of God and of the angels and saints; (6) resignation to God's will while faithfully discharging our duties; (7) serving God with greater fidelity to win His favor; (8) perseverance in prayer even though God seem not to hear us.

Hope reacts on and strengthens our faith: (1) if we firmly resolve to expect everything necessary from the goodness of God; (2) if we are constant in our hope in time of adversity as well as in time of spiritual calm and sweetness; (3) if our trust in God is a ready and joyful one.

3. *Charity.*

Charity is the virtue by which we love God above all, and ourselves and our neighbor for the love of Him. It animates all the moral virtues and gives value to their actions. Hence St. Dionysius calls it the bond of perfection.

The acts of the love of God are: (1) to delight in the infinite goodness of God; (2) to wish God infinitely perfect; (3) to desire that He be glorified by all mankind; (4) to glorify God in all our works; (5) to exert ourselves to make God known and loved; (6) to grieve over our sins and the sins of the world; (7) to desire

perfection, consummation, and heaven; (8) to stimulate ourselves and others to greater love; (9) to love our neighbor sincerely and to show this love in word and deed; (10) to speak of God with affection; (11) to converse with Him in prayer; (12) to seek to please Him even in the minutest things; (13) to endure joyfully all adversity for God's sake; (14) frequently to make acts of love; (15) to pray daily for an increase of charity; (16) to perform all our actions from the purest love of God; (17) to practise a special devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; (18) to be devoted to the interests of the Catholic Church.

The effects of the love of God are: (1) it justifies us in the sight of God; (2) it establishes a bond of friendship between us and God; (3) it makes all our acts of Christian virtue meritorious for heaven; (4) it renders the yoke of the Lord sweet and His burden light.

III. THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

All the moral virtues are subordinated to the four principal ones which are called cardinal. These four are prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. Each teaches a fourfold lesson. Prudence teaches us to profit by the experience of the past, to adapt ourselves to the circum-

stances of the present, to provide for the future, and to pause sufficiently in perplexity to clear away our doubts. Justice leads us to weigh our judgments maturely, to live lives of integrity, to respect the rights of others, and to render to every one his due. Temperance admonishes us to dispense with superfluities, to have but few wants, to avoid whatever is forbidden, and to spurn vain-glory. And fortitude warns us against pride and vain-glory in prosperity, against dejection in adversity, against taking revenge for injuries received, and against seeking a pleasant and easy life.

"Let prudence guide your reason, let fortitude govern your temper, let temperance govern your desires, and let justice rule all your actions" (St. Bonaventure).

1. *Prudence.*

Prudence is the virtue which finds and follows the right rule of action. It judges whether a concrete action harmonizes with wisdom or truth. Though primarily a virtue of the mind, prudence not only judges of the integrity of an action, but also directs the will in avoiding evil and doing good, and so becomes the most potent of the moral virtues. Hence St. Bonaventure calls prudence "the guide of all virtues," because, as St. Augustine adds, "it teaches us to

meet the present emergency, to profit by past experience, and to prepare for future contingencies."

The parts of prudence are reason, understanding, recollection, caution, circumspection, precaution, and alertness.

The acts of prudence are: (1) avoiding sin and its voluntary occasions; (2) doing what we would advise others to do in our circumstances; (3) patient endurance of adversity; (4) maintaining self-control when suddenly placed in a critical position; (5) praying for resignation to God's will.

We may fail against prudence by negligence, inconstancy, inconsiderateness, and precipitation on the one hand, and by astuteness, fraud, deception, and worldly wisdom on the other.

As our first concern as Christians should be to further our spiritual progress, we should use prudence in guarding against pride, "For he who is proud of his prudence will despise a friend and his advice and become his own enemy" (St. Justin).

2. *Justice.*

Justice is the virtue which renders to every one his due. It is very comprehensive in its application, as it defines our duties to God, our

neighbor, and ourselves. Justice is the great moral virtue of a good will. "We love justice," remarks St. Augustine, "in proportion as we hate iniquity."

The observance of the following rules of conduct will aid us in the practice of justice: (1) do unto others as you would wish them to do unto you; (2) pay your honest debts to God and man; (3) be honorable in all your actions; (4) redeem your promise; (5) injure no one; repair an unintentional wrong; (6) promote the welfare of others; (7) be humble, modest, and charitable.

Religion.

Man's principal obligation to God is religion. As a virtue religion consists in honoring God as the supreme Lord and Master. Some of the acts of religion are internal, others external. The principal external act of religion is to worship God through the adorable sacrifice of the Mass. The principal internal acts of religion are prayer and devotion. We have already considered prayer and the sacrifice of the Mass, so we shall conclude by adding a few words of explanation on the subject of *Devotion.* As an act devotion is a pious inclination of the will to God; as a habit it is promptitude in His serv-

ice. Devotion results on the one hand from a stimulation of the affections by meditating on the teaching of faith, on the other hand from the allurement of God's grace. There is a substantial and an accidental part to be considered in devotion. The substantial part is intrinsic and arises from our meditation on the infinite goodness, love, and mercy of God towards us, who are so unworthy of Him. Accidental devotion results from the allurement of grace, and consists in a pious affection, which sweetens all our hardships in God's service. Sometimes this accidental devotion becomes so intense that it affects the nervous system and manifests itself exteriorly by tears and the like; it is then called *sensible devotion.* God gives this sensible devotion as a rule in the beginning of our conversion to encourage us in His service. The other devotion, both substantial and accidental, every one may attain by humble prayer and mortification.

3. *Temperance.*

Temperance is the virtue which moderates our desires according to right reason. It establishes order and moderation in all we say and do. "Temperance," says St. Prosper, "makes us abstemious, sober, reserved, silent, serious,

and modest. It bridles our passions, moderates our affections, multiplies our holy desires, and chastises our evil ones." "Temperance is to the Christian," says St. Bonaventure, "what the bridle is to the horse." "Temperance," adds Venerable Bede, "makes us acceptable to God and man."

The acts of temperance are: (1) to abstain from illicit pleasures; (2) to moderate licit ones; (3) to abstain from lawful pleasures in due season.

The specific virtues of temperance are abstinence, sobriety, chastity, and modesty. The parts of temperance are humility, continency, meekness, clemency, application, modesty, and urbanity. The principal vices opposed to temperance are insensibility, intemperance, gluttony, lust, immodesty, incontinency, pride, anger, cruelty, curiosity, negligence, and scurrility.

4. *Fortitude.*

Fortitude is the virtue which teaches us to meet danger and to perform our duty faithfully. Fortitude conducts us unscathed through adversity, and keeps us unperturbed in time of a crisis. Hence St. Prosper says: "He is great, he is worthy of admiration, he

deserves to be called brave, who has not permitted vice to rebel against him or dominate him." The fortitude of the world usually springs from cupidity, while Christian fortitude derives its strength from the love of God. Behold the army of millions of martyrs, who professed their faith with their hearts' blood!

In actual life humility must be the companion of true fortitude. Humility will teach us to strengthen our fortitude by prayer in time of temptation, and to flee in time of temptations to impurity, for, though it may seem paradoxical, it is thus alone the brave conquer in this conflict. Magnanimity gives us courage to face danger, while patience restrains our temper and enables us to endure misfortune with an even mind. Confidence prepares us to meet a difficulty, and constancy to overcome it. Magnificence, finally, prompts us to incur the necessary expense to attain our end.

The acts of fortitude are: (1) generosity and constancy in self-discipline; (2) perseverance in prayer in spite of all difficulties; (3) bravely to resist and endure temptation, strengthened by prayer and confidence in God; (4) to guard against pride in prosperity and dejection in adversity; (5) to preserve tranquillity of mind in time of trial; (6) bravely

to face any danger in defense of virtue and religion; (7) if need be to face death itself in the profession of our faith, and in the practice of Christian charity; (8) prudently to undertake difficult tasks, strengthened by confidence in God; (9) calmly to avoid the dangers that exceed our strength.

The vices opposed to fortitude are audacity, timidity, presumption, worldly ambition, pusillanimity, impatience, insensibility, parsimony, prodigality, pertinacity, and inconstancy.

SECTION V.

LIVING IN UNION WITH GOD — ACTIVE UNION.

"IF ANY man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (*Luke* ix. 23). Thus far we have learned to deny ourselves, and take up our daily cross. We have still to learn how to follow our divine Model to active union with God. We shall therefore now consider Active Union with God in General, and then see how Heroic Union with God consists in the Perfect Observance of the Beatitudes.

I. ACTIVE UNION WITH GOD IN GENERAL.

Various theories of union with God have been advocated to satisfy the craving of the human heart. (1) Pantheism suggests the identification of the universe with God. (2) Christian Science denies the existence of the material world and identifies the spirit world with God. (3) Buddhism advocates the final absorption of

the soul into the divine essence. (4) The reformers of the sixteenth century made this union consist in a certain faith or trust in the Lord whereby their sins were not imputed to them. (5) The pietists of the following centuries made it consist in a certain pious feeling, which they called religion or the love of God, and which, they claimed, justified all their conduct. (6) The modernists of a few years ago made this union consist in a subjective adaptation of Himself on the part of God to every individual. (7) The materialists of our day have dethroned God entirely and exalted an animal man in His stead. They hold that every man is sufficient unto himself, and will find his happiness in gratifying every desire of his heart.

But Jesus Christ advocates an active, intelligent, free, personal union between God and man. According to this plan God does not debase Himself to the level of sinful man, but man, aided by God and guided by His Church, rises above himself even to active union with God. He says: "Your father knoweth what is needful for you" (*Matt.* vi. 8). "Seek first the kingdom of God, and these things will be added unto you" (*Matt.* vi. 33). "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me" (*John* iv. 34). "I do always the things that please Him"

(*John* viii. 29). "If you love Me keep My commandments" (*John* xiv. 15). "Father, not My will but Thine be done" (*Luke* xxii. 42). "I have given you an example that as I have done you may do also" (*John* xiii. 15).

1. *Object of Union with God — Happiness.*

The reason which prompts us to seek an active union with God is happiness. God created us for happiness, and implanted in our hearts a longing for an endless possession of an infinite good. St. Augustine voiced this universal longing of mankind when he said: "Thou hast created me for Thee, O God, and my heart will never rest until it rest in Thee."

The human mind wants truth; in God it finds Truth itself and the Author of all truth. The human will longs for the enjoyment of what is good; in God it finds the infinite Good and the Source of all goodness. The human heart longs to love and to be loved; in God it finds that infinite Love, who has loved us with an everlasting love, and who pleads for our love: "My son," He says, "give Me thy heart" (*Prov.* xxiii. 26). Lastly, our life is necessarily an onward motion. If we are not to drift aimlessly, we must direct it to a definite end. In God we

have the final end of our existence. If, then, we are to attain happiness, we must cultivate an active union of mind, of will, of heart, and of daily life with God. In His words to Abraham God encourages us to strive after this union. "Fear not," He says, "I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great" (*Gen.* xv. 1).

2. *The Motive of Union with God — Love.*

As the fear of the Lord is the principal motive power in self-denial, and the hope of reward in the practice of virtue, so love for God is the motive which impels us to union with Him. By love we embrace Him as the infinite Good or sum-total of all perfection. This love is nourished by contemplating God's perfections in themselves and His goodness, love, and mercy, towards us. It prompts us (1) to learn God more and more that we may esteem Him adequately; (2) to cling to Him as the greatest good; (3) to do His holy will in all things; (4) to seek our spiritual advancement to please Him and to become like to Him; (5) to endure all things for love of Him; (6) and to do all we can to make God known and loved by all mankind.

3. *Means of Union with God — Conformity to God's Will.*

There are two means of union with God; the one divine, the other human. The divine means consists in grace and the special dispensations of Providence which give man the occasion and the power to desire and to do what is pleasing to God. The human means, which is the free will of man, by yielding to the allurements of grace, gives God the opportunity to bring the will of man into conformity with His own.

This conformity demands an absolute surrender of ourselves to God. It demands (1) that we will what God wills, because He wills, when He wills, where He wills, and as He wills; (2) that we cling to God alone, and that with all our affections, and obey and please Him in all things; (3) that for God's sake we accept with equal indifference and promptness whatever is easy or difficult, agreeable or repugnant; (4) and that we persevere in this union with God and keep our wills in absolute subjection to His will.

4. *Signs of Union with God.*

We may judge of our personal union with God by the rule which the Saviour Himself

gives us: "By their fruits you shall know them" (*Matt.* vii. 16). We manifest our love for God not so much by word as by action. Hence St. John says: "Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 *John* iii. 18). We show our love for God especially (1) by avoiding every deliberate sin and imperfection; (2) by our fervor in our devotions; (3) by our zeal in the practice of humility; (4) by our perfect obedience to our lawful superiors; (5) and especially by the practice of fraternal charity, which our divine Saviour Himself makes the test of our love for God. "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not" (1 *John* iv. 20).

5. *Counsels on Union with God.*

1. As Christian perfection on earth consists in the *proximate* disposition by which we surrender ourselves to God and seek to please Him, let us frequently renew this total surrender of ourselves, that we may acquire facility and promptness in its practice.

2. Let us often pray God to take full possession of us, and to dispose of us entirely according to His good pleasure.

3. God wants us to be above all worldly

solicitude, says St. Augustine, for, by multiplying our cares, we put off our spiritual progress.

4. We must cultivate union with God with assiduity and sacrifice, and beg it most earnestly of God. Why are there so many spiritual invalids? Alas, because there are many to taste the sweetness of the spiritual life, but only few have the generous good will to suffer with the Saviour in conformity with the holy will of God.

II. HEROIC UNION WITH GOD — THE BEATITUDES.

1. *The Beatitudes in General.*

As the Decalogue sums up man's natural obligations, and the Precepts of the Church define the essential obligations of a Christian, so the Beatitudes are both the laws of spiritual development and the standard of Christian perfection. We shall here consider the Beatitudes as the standard of heroic virtue or union with God.

Two things unite in the sanctification of all of good will: the concrete nature of man, and the graces or gifts of God. These two vary in every individual, and their variety accounts for the variety in the children of God, while the Beatitudes are ever the same.

Our natural powers can not be merely pent up by negative perfection. They are active, and must attain their perfection along virtuous channels before they can enjoy the full blessings of the Beatitudes. On this account none of the Beatitudes is merely negative, but each places a definite happiness before us which we can possess and enjoy only in proportion to the perfection with which we have practised the corresponding virtues.

2. *"Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."*

On the very threshold of life we are tempted by the world in the manner most calculated to turn us from the narrow way. Before we have had experience or developed strength of character, the world invites us on the one hand to a life of indulgence and dissipation, and on the other hand threatens us with its undying enmity. In our day the inventions of science seem to have conspired with the world to enervate us by ministering to our comfort and pleasure. And yet it will ever be true that our contentment consists in having as few wants as possible, and our perfection, as far as the things of this world are concerned, in loving and living the poverty of the lowly Saviour, yes, in actually loving the

effects of poverty, such as cold, hunger, thirst, plain clothes, hard labor, and an humble and despised life, as they enter into our daily experience. This utter detachment from earthly things is impossible without a preceding and corresponding attachment to God, especially by perfect hope.

The first beatitude, therefore, emphasizes the special happiness, the reward of perfect hope. This flows from that intimate union with God which makes us indifferent to all earthly things, and enables us to conform to His holy will and trust in His aid, even when, humanly speaking, there is no hope. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (*Matt.* vi. 33).

3. *"Blessed Are the Meek for They Shall Possess the Land."*

Intimately allied with the world in the battle of life is man's selfish nature. This hankers after worldly indulgence, pleasure, and honor, while his nobler nature craves for union with God. To attain intimate union with God by perfect conformity to His holy will, man must, therefore, have gained so complete a mastery over pride and self-love, that he is dead, or totally indifferent to himself and lives only in

and for God. This victory he achieves by the practice of heroic temperance on the one hand, and by religious self-immolation on the other. When man is thus united to God he has learned from his Master to be meek and humble of heart. He detests sin as the greatest evil in the world, and can be aroused to anger only by zeal for the glory of God, like his Master in the temple, or when championing the outraged rights of a helpless neighbor. Being at peace with God and man, he is thus enabled to enjoy the happiness of the second beatitude; "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."

4. *"Blessed Are They That Mourn for They Shall be Comforted."*

Suffering is indigenous to this valley of tears. The pessimist views its darkest shadows, the optimist its silvery lining. But the perfect Christian accepts the sufferings of life in a spirit of faith and says with his divine Master: "Father, not my will but Thine be done" (*Luke* xxii. 42). Though he can not fathom the mystery of suffering, he has such implicit confidence in God that the remotest shadow of doubt concerning the wisdom, goodness, and love of this devoted Friend never enters his mind. With holy Job he could say: "Although He

should kill me, I will trust in Him" (*Job* xiii. 15).

On His part God is never outdone in generosity. And, as we often learn the love and devotion of an earthly friend only in adversity, so it is especially when we cling to Him by heroic faith in suffering that God reveals the tenderest sympathy of His infinite love for us.

By conformity to the will of God in suffering the ills of life, therefore, we attain the third degree of Christian perfection and are entitled to the happiness of those of whom the Saviour said: "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

5. *"Blessed Are They That Hunger and Thirst after Justice for They Shall Have Their Fill."*

When man experiences hunger and thirst in a normal condition of health, these indicate the labor and endurance which produced them. This rule applies no less to the spiritual than to the physical order. A relish for God and spiritual things in a Christian is therefore indicative of earnest striving after union with God. It also indicates that man's taste has not been perverted by the allurements of the flesh and the world, nor paralyzed by a pessimistic view of life. Having attained the perfection of the

first three beatitudes without loss of fervor, the soul may now exclaim in the words of the Psalmist: "As the heart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God" (*Ps.* xli. 2). And as God is both faithful and true, the hunger and thirst of that soul for justice, or for the fulfilment of God's holy will in all things, is rewarded by a higher degree of happiness which results from its finding in God all that it can desire.

6. *"Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Shall Obtain Mercy."*

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand you here looking up to heaven?" (*Acts* i. 11.) These words of the angels to the disciples, after the ascension of Jesus into heaven, may truly be applied to the soul that hesitates after attaining the happiness of the fourth beatitude. For, she has not yet reached the summit of perfection, and has still a great work to perform. The first commandment is, indeed, to love God above all; but the second is like to it, to love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. The love of a soul, intimately united to God, should therefore prompt her to love all mankind, to sympathize with all, to have compassion for all, and to do her utmost to bring all mankind to the

same union with God. This love transcends the limits of justice by blending justice with mercy. It is what St. Paul calls " putting on the bowels of mercy " (*Col.* iii. 13). It deifies the Christian character by making it gentle, sensitive, and compassionate towards all creation. It is contagious and communicates itself to all who come in contact with it. It is rewarded by God and man with a special happiness, for " Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

7. *" Blessed Are the Clean of Heart, for They Shall See God."*

In the performance of the works of mercy the Christian soul is in danger of being influenced by the pestilence of sin; for in this life she must meet sin in the concrete, that is, in the person of the sinner. If she is naturally sympathetic, the soul is easily contaminated. If she is self-contained and reserved, she is in danger of becoming bitter and cynical on the one hand, or daring and reckless on the other.

This personal danger, arising from contact with persons, the Christian soul can remove only by cultivating a personal union with the God-Man Jesus Christ by a devout performance of her religious duties. If fervor and devotion have kept her mind united to God by a faith

ever free from delusion, if they have kept her heart united to Him by unselfish love, and if they have kept her will united to God by perfect conformity to His holy will in her performance of the works of mercy, the Christian soul has attained another degree of perfection. And at this stage she is entitled to the happiness which the Saviour promised when He said: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God."

8. *"Blessed Are the Peacemakers, for They Shall Be Called the Children of God."*

Lasting peace can be established only on the principles of truth and justice. The Christian soul, who is a peacemaker between God and man, or between man and man, must be disinterested to the claims of both, and compromise neither truth nor justice, to establish a lasting peace. To champion the cause of both, the soul must not only love God, but also know, trust, and sympathize with her neighbor to the extent that she is willing to sacrifice herself to establish a lasting peace.

The Christian soul knows that though sin is objective, the guilt of the sinner is subjective, that is, relatively proportionate to the sinner's dimmed vision, weakened will, and passionate

nature, that it is proportionate to the suddenness and violence of the temptation, and to every circumstance that influenced the sinner in his transgression.

In full sympathy with the difficulties before her, and with an unshaken faith in the offender and a boundless patience and toleration with him, the soul who acts as peacemaker brings the guilty one to admit the claims of both truth and justice, and moves him to struggle honestly to fulfil both. Having strengthened him in this resolution she sends him away *feeling* how good and merciful God is, or how deserving his neighbor of his nobler consideration.

By thus acting as the mediator of God on earth the Christian soul unites herself, and endears herself still more to Him, and receives the beatitude of being more than a child of men, a true child of God.

9. *"Blessed Are They That Suffer Persecution for Justice' Sake, for Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."*

The pinnacle of Christian perfection is to rejoice in suffering for love of God. The happiness of this beatitude is not promised to those eccentric individuals who by their inhuman

tactlessness arouse the antagonism of others; neither is it promised to religious cranks who provoke the ill will of others by their glaring faults and obtrusive devotions. It is reserved for that meek and humble Christian soul, who is nailed to the cross of her Master by the diabolical hatred of the world. She derives no pleasure from the opposition, as some strange characters do, nor does she receive consolation from any purely human source. From the days of Abel to our day countless men and women, who acted in perfect union with God and with the purest of motives and the best of intentions towards their neighbor, have suffered from the antagonism of ignorance and indifference, from the opposition of nervousness and intolerance, from the jealousy of vile suspicion and base slander, and from the hatred of contumely, ostracism, and systematic persecution. To suffer all this meekly for love of Him who died in ignominy and shame for love of us, is perfect conformity to the example of our divine Master as well as to the holy will of God.

Indeed, the crowning test of love for God is, after having triumphed over the world and self, and lived and labored for the glory of God and the welfare of mankind, to endure with pleasure

misfortune, hostility, persecution, and virtual martyrdom. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

SECTION VI.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERIOR LIFE IN THE RELIGIOUS STATE.

The Religious state is a fixed manner of life, counseled by the Saviour and approved by the Church in His name, in which those who enter profess to strive after Christian perfection by the observance of poverty, chastity, and obedience. It comprises various Religious bodies: (1) Orders, in which solemn vows are made; (2) Congregations, in which the members take simple vows; (3) Religious Institutes, in which the members take no vows but strive to observe their spirit.

In a wide sense all Religious bodies approved by the Church are called Orders. Taken in this sense, every Order has a general and a particular object. The general object is always the glory of God and the sanctification of its members. The special object, or the means of attaining this general end, always consists in the performance of some work of mercy.

In accordance with their specific object Orders

are divided into: (1) Contemplative, which aid the Church by a life of prayer and penance; (2) Active, which emphasize the corporal works of mercy; (3) Mixed, which unite the performance of the spiritual works of mercy to a life of prayer and penance. Active Orders have their model in Martha, contemplative Orders in Mary, and mixed Orders in Jesus and His apostles.

In most Orders of our day provision is made for some members to practise the corporal works of mercy, while the others devote themselves to apostolic labors or to educational works. Thus provision is made for every soul that wishes to give her life to God. Unfortunately, the harvest is so great and the laborers so few that Religious are often forced to devote more time to the active life than their founders intended.

I. THE RELIGIOUS LIFE IN GENERAL.

The Religious life is the interior life as practised in the Religious state. The characteristic spirit of a particular Order is produced by emphasizing a certain principle of the interior life in striving after its special end.

Though the principles of the interior life are the same for all Christians, the application of these principles is facilitated in the Religious

state. Here souls enjoy a manifold advantage in freedom from earthly ties, in regularity of life, in the stability of vows, in the community of interest, and the like.

1. *The Religious Vows.*

The evangelical counsels embrace the practice of voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience. By vowing to observe the evangelical counsels according to the rule of a Religious Order a Christian soul embraces the Religious state and enters the harbor of salvation. St. John assures us that the three great enemies of salvation are the concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh, and the pride of life. By embracing the Religious life a soul concentrates her energies on conquering these three enemies, so that she may love God and serve Him alone.

By the vow of poverty she renounces the arbitrary use of earthly possessions, binds herself to cultivate a holy indifference to temporal things, and to content herself with the requisites for a plain, simple life. By the vow of chastity she renounces the pleasures of sense, lawful in married life, and binds herself to cultivate virginal modesty as a spouse of Christ. Finally, by the vow of obedience she consecrates her will

to God, and humbly surrenders herself to Him in the person of her lawful superior.

2. *The Religious Rule.*

Every Religious Order has a rule of life approved by the Church. By defining the object, the labors, and the government of the Order, this rule directs the members in the observance of the evangelical counsels.

A rule approved by the Church (1) gives stability to those who follow it; (2) saves them from many delusions of pride and self-love; (3) makes known God's will to them at every moment; (4) protects them against the dissipation of time, of grace, and of energy; (5) stimulates their generosity and fervor; (6) enables them to practise every virtue; (7) and facilitates their final perseverance.

3. *Community Life.*

Another great advantage which Religious possess is community life or life in common. For a soul desirous of perfection community life is superior to a solitary life in many ways: (1) it is more conformable to our social nature; (2) it enables each member of the community to profit by the talents of the others; (3) in it the good example of the fervent stimulates the con-

duct of the rest; (4) it enables the members of the community to do more collectively than they could accomplish by laboring independently; (5) it protects the members against the dangers of vanity and self-complacency; (6) it affords the members constant opportunity of practising charity.

To advance on the way to perfection Religious should observe the following rules on community life: (1) seek your happiness in giving satisfaction to the community; (2) sacrifice yourself to God by performing your duties faithfully, and by employing your time well; (3) promote harmony by accommodating yourself to others; (4) avoid all singularity as the evidence of hidden pride; (5) be ever kind and affable and you will always be charitable; (6) by the practice of humility be deferential to God and man; (7) show your gratitude even for the smallest favors; (8) let patience supply for the defects of congeniality; (9) be blind, deaf, and dumb to everything but the glory of God, your spiritual progress, and the welfare of souls.

II. THE EXCELLENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

In speaking of the excellence of the Religious life, St. Bernard says: "A Religious lives

more purely, falls more rarely, rises more promptly, walks more prudently, is refreshed more freely, reposes more securely, dies more confidently, is purified more promptly, and is rewarded more abundantly." Let us consider these features of the Religious life which combine in producing these fruits enumerated by St. Bernard.

1. *The Religious Life Is Supernatural.*

The Religious life is founded on the evangelical counsels. Jesus counseled a life of poverty when He said to the young man in the Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor; and come, follow Me" (*Matt.* xix. 21). He counseled virginal chastity when He said of it: "He that can take, let him take it" (*Matt.* xix. 12). He counseled a life of obedience by "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (*Phil.* ii. 8), and by inviting us to follow His example. He exhorted to perseverance in the state of perfection when He said to another young man, whom He had invited to become a disciple: "No man putting his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (*Luke* ix. 62).

In all ages of the Church the Holy Ghost has

moved generous souls to do great things for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Many of these He inspired to perpetuate their work by founding Religious Orders. After testing them for years, and studying them carefully holy Church has given these Religious Orders her positive approbation. They ever remain the object of her special solicitude. In the past they have rewarded her maternal care by presenting to her the brightest lights in the galaxy of her canonized saints.

2. *The Religious Life a Life of Labor.*

In the entire history of the world no other body of men or women has done so much for the glory of God, for the benefit of humanity, or for their own individual welfare as the Religious. They converted and civilized the nations, taught them the arts and sciences, preserved the ancient classics for us, and enriched our modern literature. In this day of philanthropy they are still foremost in the performance of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, giving not merely money, but their daily lives, which they have consecrated to the Master in this cause. The ignorant and the vicious may accuse them as they accused the Master, but every succeeding age will vindicate them by bearing testimony to

the fact that no other body of men or women systematically devote so many hours to honest labor, and so few to recreation, as Religious.

3. *The Religious Life a Life of Self-Denial.*

In the Religious life the principles of self-denial are applied systematically. The Christian soul must forsake the vanities and follies of the world on entering the convent. She is housed in a plain dwelling, clothed in modest raiment, fed plain fare, and inured to the simple life. Her rule of life directs her to examine her conduct twice a day, so that by vigilance and penance she may offer God a perfect sacrifice and serve Him with her whole heart and soul, with all her mind and strength. In the novitiate she is taught to subjugate her inordinate desires, to be indifferent to earthly things, and above all to detach herself from self-esteem, self-love, and self-will. Thus she is formed, according to the spirit of her Order, into a living copy of her crucified Master.

4. *The Religious Life a Life of Prayer.*

The Christian soul not only surrenders herself to God upon entering the convent, but renews this oblation daily. She awakens with a prayer on her lips, entertains the subject of her

meditation while dressing, performs her morning devotions, spends her allotted time in meditation, assists at Holy Mass and receives Holy Communion.

During the day she finds time for spiritual reading, the recitation of the rosary and of the divine office, a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and other pious practices. Prompted by her spirit of piety and devotion her mind and heart commune with God during the busy hours of the day, even as those of the slaves of the world are filled with vain thoughts and desires. At noon and at night she has her time for recollection and self-examination, and she closes the day with another meditation followed by evening devotions. Thus renewing her strength by intimate union with God, the Religious joyfully performs the labors and endures the trials of life, for she has found the source of happiness of strength and of love.

5. *The Religious Life a Life of Virtue.*

The Christian soul enters the convent to strive after perfection by the practice of virtue. She has already learned the first lesson of humility from her divine Spouse. Her entire life now grounds her more and more in this virtue. Her spiritual exercises imbue her with a spirit

of faith, of hope, and of love. Her rule, the example of her associates, the counsels of her superiors, and her daily experience teach her prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, while the nature of her life and the special dispensations of Providence provide her with abundant opportunities of practising every virtue.

6. *The Religious Life Facilitates Christian Perfection.*

The Religious life facilitates Christian perfection by affording the greatest safeguards, the greatest aids, and the greatest opportunities of living a life of perfection.

The safeguards of the Religious life are numerous: (1) it protects the soul against the allurements of ease and comforts by prescribing a simple life; (2) it protects her against intemperance in eating and drinking by serving frugal meals; (3) it protects her against dangerous company by associating her with the spouses of Christ; (4) it protects her against the dangers of pride and vanity by inducing her to live an humble and mortified life; (5) it protects her against the follies of self-will by subjecting her to the guidance of her lawful superiors; (6) it protects her against human respect by teach-

ing her to fear God rather than man; (7) it protects her against worldly ambition by consecrating her to the service of God; (8) it protects her against the temptations of the devil by teaching her to watch and pray lest she fall into sin.

The Religious life likewise offers a soul the greatest aids to a life of perfection: (1) it holds up the lives of Christ and His saints as models for her daily imitation; (2) it permits her to reside under the same roof with her sacramental Lord; (3) it surrounds her with the means of grace; (4) it establishes her in virtue by a life of stability and regularity; (5) it stimulates her on the way to perfection by the letter of the rule and the example of her associates.

Finally, the Religious life gives the soul the greatest opportunity of living a life of perfection: (1) it offers her the opportunity of practising every virtue in security; (2) it gives her ample occasion for prayer and devotion; (3) it gives her steady employment while she is well; (4) it consoles her in affliction; (5) it cares for her in sickness and old age; (6) it gives her every consolation in death; (7) it shortens her stay in purgatory and hastens her entrance into heaven.

7. The Religious Life a Life of Union with God.

The Religious life is pre-eminently a life of union with God. Upon entering the convent the soul strives to make herself worthy of her espousal to Jesus Christ by self-denial and the practice of virtue. In proportion as she dies to the world and her natural self, does she live a life of union with God. Enlightened by faith and strengthened by grace she conforms her life to the holy will of God in things repugnant to human nature as well as in things naturally acceptable. She gradually learns to unite herself as devoutly to Jesus in the communion of the cross as she receives Him in the sacrament of His love. In proportion as she approaches this stage does she become poor in spirit but rich in grace, meek in demeanor but powerful in influence, considerate for others and forgetful of self, clean of heart and filled with the zeal of the Lord. Thus fastened to the cross of Christ by the mystic nails of poverty, chastity, and obedience, she becomes so intimately united to her heavenly spouse that she can say with St. Paul: "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (*Gal.* ii. 20).

PART II

THE SUPERNATURAL LIFE

The Supernatural Life

The Supernatural Life is the spiritual life considered from God's standpoint. It is the effect which grace produces in every person of good will. Prompted by His goodness God always does His part to bring every creature to the perfection of its nature. The development of the vegetative and animal life, being unhampered by created will, proceeds with the accuracy of the laws which God has established to govern the physical world. In the moral order, however, the influence of God depends on the good will or free co-operation of man. Only in proportion as man surrenders himself to God, by the observance of the laws of the interior life, is God free to further his spiritual development. Guided by His love and mercy God then does all He can to bring man to that perfection of grace and glory to which He has destined him.

The paternal solicitude of God for man is evident from the work of creation and redemption where He was not hampered by the perverse will of man. In making man it would have sufficed if God had endowed him with the power

of attaining the perfection of his nature, but instead He created man in original justice and holiness. In the work of the redemption one prayer of Jesus Christ, one drop of His precious blood, would have sufficed to atone for the sins of the world. Prompted by His love and mercy, however, Jesus did not hesitate to shed the last drop of His precious blood for our sake and die in ignominy and shame.

If human actions are difficult to understand at times, how much more incomprehensible must be the works of God? Still, if we approach them with reverence and love, we may trust, with the aid of God's grace, to find much in this study to stimulate our good will in the service of God. We shall consider:

I. The Supernatural Order in General.

II. The Divine Influence in Self-Denial, or Passive Purgation.

III. The Divine Influence in the Practice of Virtue, or Passive Illumination.

IV. The Divine Influence Uniting the Soul to God, or Passive Union.

SECTION I.

THE SUPERNATURAL ORDER.

THERE are three kinds of beings in the spiritual world: men, angels, and God. Whatever pertains to the perfection of man as man is *natural* for him. Thus, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness is natural to man. Whatever pertains to the perfection of angels, but is undue to man as a being of a lower order, is *preternatural* to him. Thus immortality is natural to angels but preternatural to man as man. Finally, whatever pertains to the perfection of God and is undue to both angels and men, but which God has graciously extended to His creatures, is *supernatural* to them. Hence, the supernatural order is that part of the economy of God to which man has no natural claim. It includes all that pertains to man's destiny, redemption, sanctification, and glorification.

As creatures of God mankind has no claim to the inheritance of heaven, but God freely bestowed that right by giving mankind a supernatural destiny. When mankind forfeited the

means of attaining that destiny through the sin of Adam, God restored it through the work of redemption. Even now, when born to the spiritual life in holy Baptism, man is powerless of himself to attain perfection, so God promotes the spiritual growth of all of good will by the work of sanctification, and crowns all who persevere with Beatific Vision.

To obtain a clearer outline of the supernatural order and of the infinite goodness of God manifested in it, let us consider God, His works, and His supernatural gifts to man.

I. GOD.

1. *The Nature and Attributes of God.*

God is a spirit infinitely perfect, who exists of necessity and on whom all things depend. God's nature is His essence considered as the sum total of His perfections. Essence makes a being what it is. Thus body and soul constitute the essence of man. The essence of God consists in this, that of necessity God is, and is of Himself, sufficient unto Himself. Hence, when asked about Himself by Abraham, God replied: "I am who am" (*Exod.* iii. 14). Nature is essence in the concrete, or considered as the source of action. In God there is no real

distinction between essence and nature. The one considers Him who is, the other Him who acts.

The attributes are the perfections necessarily inherent in the divine nature. Those attributes which are peculiar to God as one in essence are called absolute, while those which refer to Him as three in person are called relative. In creatures attributes are qualities really distinct from their nature and essence, but God is a being of such exalted perfection that there is no real distinction between His nature and His absolute attributes, nor between the attributes themselves. There is, however, a foundation in the essence and perfection of God for us to make a distinction in our minds in order to obtain a clearer idea of the divine nature. The attributes, therefore, are only so many different views we may take of God as God. When we consider God as the one, necessary Being, He is simple, infinite, immutable, inconfusable, immense, eternal, invisible, incomprehensible, and ineffable. When we consider God as a perfect being, He is one, true, good, omnipresent, and omnipotent. Lastly, when we consider God as a spirit, He is omniscient and almighty.

2. *The Mind of God.*

The mind of God is His divine nature considered as the source of His knowledge. God understands all things perfectly. He adequately comprehends His divine nature, and in it has the knowledge of all beings. Seeing all things in Himself, God's knowledge is in no way dependent on the lapse of time or on the free will of man. To Him all things are present, none past or to come. Antecedently to the decree of creation God sees all things are possible. Consecutively to that decree He sees the minutest detail of those things which He includes in the economy of creation, whether He positively wills them to happen according to the laws of nature and grace, or whether He merely permits them to happen through the free will of His creatures. Hence, in wondering contemplation the Royal Psalmist justly exclaimed: "O Lord, Thou hast made all things in wisdom" (*Ps.* ciii. 24).

3. *The Will of God.*

The will of God is His divine nature considered as the source of His love, desire, and power. God necessarily loves Himself. He solemnly assures us that He has loved us with

an everlasting love. Being infinitely holy He can not love evil directly, though He may love physical evil indirectly for the sake of the good that will result from it. But sin, or moral evil, God can never love, because it is always opposed to what is good. Still, God can and does tolerate sin, though He detests and reprobates it. Having supplied all with superabundant means of doing good, God would have to deprive man of his liberty, if He could not permit or tolerate its abuse.

God necessarily desires His own honor and glory. He freely desires the creation, government, and consummation of the world and the happiness of every creature. Objectively considered, or antecedently to the choice of free secondary causes, God desires only what is absolutely good. Concretely considered, or consecutively to the free choice of secondary causes, God desires the good with its individuating circumstances of evil.

The power of God is dependent on the decision of His mind and the desire or choice of His will for its operation. God could have created countless other worlds than He did. He could have placed every creature in countless other circumstances. But it was God's pleasure to create this particular world, and to have every

creature in it to occupy the particular circumstances of time and place He has assigned to it from all eternity. From the dawn of creation to the consummation of the world the power of God infallibly governs all things to the honor and glory of their Maker, and the sanctification of all men of good will.

4. *The Virtues of God.*

The virtues of God are His divine nature considered as the source of His holiness or moral perfection. Evidently only those virtues can be rightly applied to God which imply no imperfection in themselves. There are four virtues which attain their highest perfection only in God. They are love, justice, mercy, and providence. As we have already seen, God loves righteousness, rejoices in it, and is zealous for it, even as He hates and detests iniquity. He has freely conferred the right to eternal happiness on man, and, because He is just and true, God will infallibly confer it upon all of persevering good will and refuse it to all who die in mortal sin. As "the earth is full of His mercy" God is ever ready to pardon the repentant sinner while his probation is yet progressing, and to reinstate the returning prodigal in the

inheritance which he has squandered. Finally, God is provident, that is, He has wisely planned this world and governs it with equal wisdom so that it will contribute to His honor and glory as well as to the welfare of all His creatures.

II. THE EXTERNAL WORKS OF GOD.

There are two actions of God, each producing a twofold work. One action was necessary, the other free; the first was from eternity, the second began with time; the first was internal, the other external. In the first the Father begot the Son by His knowledge of Himself, and the mutual love of Father and Son became the Holy Ghost. By the second action God created and governs the world for His glory and the welfare of His creatures. We are here concerned in the external work of God. By creation He made the world out of nothing and preserves it in existence. By His government of the world God moves every creature to glorify Him by seeking its own happiness.

In studying this external work of God, even in a cursory manner, both truth and justice demand that we view it from God's standpoint, and not subject Him and His infinite perfections to the limited standard of our finite minds.

With the doctrine outlined in the preceding chapter clearly before our minds, we may proceed to study the details of God's work.

1. *The Economy of God's Work.*

The economy of God's work is His order and method of manifesting His perfection in and through creation, or His system in the creation, government, and consummation of the world. Three things enter into this economy: the plan to be followed, the means to be employed, and the method to be adopted in manifesting the perfection of God in and through created things. Evidently all three must be left to the holy will of God.

In the first place, God will choose a plan that is practical. He is free to choose from the whole range of possible worlds. An adequate reproduction of His infinite perfection is impossible, even as an ideal world is impracticable. A practical plan must apply to a concrete world to the minutest detail, and do justice to the Divine Architect. From the countless worlds He could have created, and from the countless places He could have assigned to each creature in His plan, God decided on the plan for the world of which we are a part.

"But why create those whom God foreknew

to become reprobates?" some may ask. "Why is thy eye evil because I am good?" (*Matt.* xx. 15) replied the Saviour to a similar question. Creation is certainly an evidence of God's goodness, which should be gratefully accepted by every being. Not to create those who have a bad will, or to create them confirmed in grace, might satisfy the infinite love of God, but would not glorify His justice and mercy. And "His tender mercies are over all His works" (*Ps.* cxliv. 9). God's kindness to His creatures can not make Him unjust to Himself. The primary object of creation must be the glory of God. Even the reprobate must contribute to it. If they will not glorify the goodness, the love, and the mercy of God by living Christian lives, they will have to glorify the justice of God for ever. Besides, not to create those whom God foreknew to become reprobates would undoubtedly interfere with the law of generation and probably might have destroyed the human race at an early date.

In justice to Himself and to His creatures God must give them the means of working out their destiny. On the one hand He might have gone to the extreme of creating man confirmed in grace or even in the enjoyment of glory. On the other hand He had to give them at least suf-

ficient means to attain salvation. A middle course probably harmonized more with God's infinite perfection. At any rate it pleased His holy will. Having decided on His plan, God does all in His power to bring His creatures to the perfection of that plan, wherever His designs are not frustrated by the shortsightedness or perversity of man. In the beginning He endowed mankind with the gifts of original justice and holiness, and supplied them with an easy, practical means of ensuring its possession for ever. When by the perversity of man the means of attaining his destiny were forfeited, God the Son established means of grace so superabundant in the work of the redemption that holy Church exclaims in exultation: "O happy fault of Adam that merited for us such a Saviour!"

Even in the present economy of His work God could have established different means of attaining life everlasting. He could have revealed additional truths, enacted additional laws, provided for different means of grace. But who will deny that the means God has established are superabundant for all of good will, or that they do not harmonize with the love, the justice, and the mercy of God?

Finally, God could have chosen a different

manner of applying the means of perfection. He could have treated with every soul individually, or employed the ministry of angels in His dealings with mankind. But would that have been as human or sympathetic as His ministry in the Church? No doubt one reason for the Incarnation of the Son of God was that as one of us He might sympathize with us and thereby establish a bond that would draw us to Him. For the same reason God has always employed the ministry of man in dealing with man. Besides, God could have established a different form of worship. But would it have been more appropriate? Would a different method for growth in virtue have been more secure? A different period of probation more advantageous? Let us say with St. Paul: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!" (*Rom.* xi. 33.)

2. *The Creation of the World.*

When we view the creation of the world in its true perspective we find the six requisites for its perfect accomplishment in the attributes of God: (1) the motive for a free action is furnished by His goodness; (2) the capacity for

the action by His knowledge; (3) an ideal or plan of action by His perfection; (4) a practical plan of action by His wisdom; (5) the ability for the action by His power; (6) and the object or end for the action in the glorification of God and the happiness of His creatures.

God sees all things knowable, according to the perfection of His nature, simply in His divine essence. He sees them in every possible phase and circumstance, and in every possible relationship of dependence on Himself and on one another according to the laws of causation. When, therefore, His goodness prompts God to glorify Himself in and through created things, His wisdom consults His perfection as His true ideal or model of action, and selects from among all possible beings a concrete world that can adequately fulfil His plan. In accordance with this plan, God destines His work to consist of inanimate matter, a vegetable, and an animal kingdom, man, and the angels.

God calls this world into existence by His power, and, guided by His divine wisdom, develops it with absolute fidelity, as long as He is not thwarted by the perverse will of His creatures. When God's knowledge foresees the interference of intelligent or rational secondary causes, His wisdom provides that the primary

object of creation, which is the glory of God, shall never be frustrated. Prompted by His goodness the wisdom of God provides, besides, that His power will do all in harmony with His plan, and without forcing the free will of His creatures, to promote their individual happiness or perfection. For, in justice to His infinite perfection, both His plan, and His part in the execution of that plan must necessarily be perfect, tend to perfection, and attain the highest degree of perfection, which the concrete circumstances of every individual creature will permit.

From all that God has done for man in the works of creation, redemption, and sanctification we may reasonably infer that the goodness of God has inserted the choicest blessings of heaven in His plan for all of good will, and that God takes a greater interest in the happiness of man than man does himself.

The elaboration and final execution of God's plan in the natural order is called Providence, and in the supernatural order Predestination.

3. *Government of Creatures in General.*

In creation and preservation God gives every creature its concrete nature and power of action. By fixed laws He moves irrational creatures to act for His glory and their individual preserva-

tion and development, and concurs in their action. Not having given them intelligence, He gives irrational creatures no more choice of the motive, plan, or purpose of their existence than of their position in the order of causation.

In making angels and man to His image and likeness, however, and destining them for the joys of heaven, God has not only given them an ability and a capacity for action, which He has denied to the lower creatures, but He has also implanted in their natures an *inclination* for His own motive, place, and purpose of action. This inclination impels angels and man to action, and prompts them to promote their own happiness by the pursuit of truth and goodness in particular, but leaves them free to act in harmony with God's motive, plan, and purpose, or to substitute their own motive, plan, and purpose in their stead. As an incentive to act in harmony with Him, God offers the reward of heaven for good will, and threatens eternal reprobation for bad will to all intelligent and rational creatures.

4. *Government of Irrational Creatures.*

In addition to a motive, plan, and purpose of action, every efficient cause must have an opportunity or *proximate occasion* for action. God's

own goodness gave Him the opportunity to create and preserve the world and to move it to contribute to His glory. In moving individual creatures to act, and in concurring in their action as their First Cause, God provides this opportunity for Himself and for them (1) in the physical order by the fixed laws which He has established for the government of the universe, (2) and in the moral order by the free choice or election of intelligent and rational creatures.

As an illustration of how God moves irrational creatures as well as man, in his *spontaneous* movements to action and concurs in their action by the fixed laws of nature, let us consider a grain of seed that has found its way into congenial soil. It lies there until it is moistened by rain, and quickened by the warm rays of the sun. This circumstance is the *proximate occasion* for God to move that seed to germinate and grow, and to concur in its germination and development. At the same time it is the *proximate occasion* for the germ of life in the seed to assert itself, to sprout and advance, until it attains the highest degree of perfection which its concrete circumstances will permit.

The laws of nature are more complex in their application in the animal kingdom, and most

complex, though just as infallible, in their influence on those acts of man which are entirely spontaneous, while they exert a proportionate amount of influence on those actions of man which may be called mixed, because they are prompted partly by spontaneous impulse and partly are elicited by free will. In fact, the unswerving application of the natural law is so universally recognized that it has become the foundation of the axiom: "Nature always does her best." When Christianized this axiom assures us that God always carries His work as near to the perfection of His plan as concrete circumstances will permit.

5. *God's Government of the Sinner.*

In a general way we may divide the actions of man into involuntary, mixed, and voluntary. We have already seen how the laws of nature govern the involuntary actions of man, and how they exert their influence on the mixed actions, in so far as they are involuntary. We shall now proceed to consider the actions of man in the moral order, or in so far as they are determined by man's choice or free will. We have already seen how God has implanted in human nature a longing for happiness. Now, this longing, which prompts inferior creatures to

seek their perfection in accordance with the fixed laws of nature, also impels man to act and to seek his happiness in particular, but it leaves the determination of his deliberate actions to his *free choice,* or volition. In consequence of this liberty of action, man is placed in a dilemma early in life where he must choose between self-gratification and the service of God. For, on the one hand, his nature, which inclines to evil as the result of original sin, will be allured to " the broad way " by the world and the devil, and, on the other hand, his mind, though obscured, inclines to truth and justice, and his will craves for happiness, as the result of the tendency implanted in him by his Creator. Even in this dilemma his inborn sense of right and wrong is strong enough to enable man to overcome some of the lesser temptations of life, though he surely needs the help of God to conquer serious temptation.

As a practical illustration of God's government of the sinner, let us consider him at his worst. Let us suppose that the sinner was reared in ignorance and vice, that the enemies of his salvation had possession of his heart before he attained the use of reason, that they filled his mind with error and prejudice, that they gagged his conscience in his infancy,

that they bound him with the fetters of vice till they seemed to constitute his very nature, that they had enthroned his passions as regents of his soul, that they had hardened his heart and smothered every noble aspiration in him by every bad habit; in fact, that they had employed him so constantly in doing wrong that he did not even have time to pause and reflect.

Even in this deplorable state the fundamental truth, that there is a God who rewards the good and punishes the wicked, remains engraven on the sinner's nature, and may prompt the sinner to go from one extreme to the other. The reaction will begin, if it occurs at all, when the sinner is forced by some misfortune to look into himself and acknowledge that his longing for happiness is still unsatisfied. For it is then that he hears the sentinel of truth proclaim: "Time is fleeting — life is short — eternity lasting.— Man wants something more than the world can give to make him happy." If that sinner turns away from the truth like Pilate, he will probably forfeit his chance for heaven. But, if he lends a willing ear to the truth, the voice of truth will continue: "As you sow, so shall you reap.— Eternal misery to him who betrays his conscience to the last. Eternal happiness to him, who hears the truth and follows

it.— While there is life there is hope; but after death comes the judgment." Prompted by the fear of hell and the desire of heaven the sinner murmurs in his dejection: "I wish I could; but I can not." Truth exhorts: "Then turn to God and ask His help! He alone can help you now; and He is interested in you as your Maker." The sinner obeys. Impelled by his natural desire for happiness and his inborn fear of misery, the sinner turns to God for the first time in his life and prays: "Pity! Mercy! Help!" That prayer not only touches the heart of the God of goodness, love, and mercy, but it also gives Him the *proximate occasion* of championing the cause of that sinner, the opportunity for which He anxiously waited from eternity. Up to this, according to His plan, He had to content Himself by manifesting His eagerness to help: "Behold, I stand at the gate and knock" (*Apoc.* iii. 20). Up to this the sinner had exercised what dominion he had over his actions to wander farther and farther away from God. But at the instant he turned a willing ear to the voice of truth, he began to turn to the eternal Truth, and in Him found light and encouragement. As soon, then, as he paused in his pursuit of sin to entertain the good desire which the truth stimulated, and

to ask God's help, thus submitting for once to the motive, plan, and purpose of the Creator, God instantly availed Himself of the opportunity to lead the sinner the first step on the way to repentance. What else could God mean when He says: "Turn to Me, and I will turn to you" (*Zach.* i. 3). "Be converted to Me, and you shall be saved" (*Is.* xlv. 22). "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you" (*Matt.* vii. 7). Surely, the Saviour acted entirely in accordance with this teaching, when on a similar occasion He replied to the prayer of the penitent thief: "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (*Luke* xxiii. 43).

If, then, the sinner continues to pray and to cultivate the friendship of God, and so offers God a constant opportunity to aid him, God will draw on the infinite treasures of His grace to give the sinner light and counsel, strength and support, hope and confidence, until the fetters of sin are broken, until the flesh, the world, and the devil are conquered, until the soul has found peace and comfort in repentant love and fidelity in God's service. Yes, so eagerly does God desire the salvation of every soul, according to the teaching of St. Thomas and St. Al-

phonsus, that He will send an angel from heaven, if necessary, in answer to the prayer of a soul in distress to lead her on the way to truth and happiness.

6. *God's Government of the Just.*

The advantages of the conflict between the powers for good and the powers for evil are all in man's favor when he is at peace with God. In that condition the natural longing of man for happiness has found comfort in the friendship of his Maker, and a means of expression in the habits of prayer and devotion. Besides, sanctifying grace, and all that goes with it, inclines man strongly to God in the supernatural order, for in addition to living in the grace of God. his mind is enlightened, his will strengthened in doing good, while his heart has become the temple of the Blessed Trinity itself.

Let us now consider the just man placed in the dilemma of a serious temptation. To emphasize man's decisive influence on his action, let us say, on the one hand, that the flesh, the world, and the devil have united in the attack, at a very opportune time, and under every other favorable circumstance. Let us say, on the other hand, that man is taken unawares by the

assault, that is, that the spiritual powers we have just enumerated were dormant, or not in actual use when the assault was made. Now, we may know how the conflict will begin; but we can not tell how it will develop or end, as that depends on the choice or decision of that man's free will. For the sake of emphasis we may admit that the enemies of his soul had advanced to the very sanctuary of that man's heart, and had aroused the sympathy of his natural delectation, before his mind realized the danger he was in. But the instant it realizes the danger, conscience gives the alarm. Then, man, prompted both by the natural habit of friendship for God, and especially by the supernatural habit of sanctifying grace, and perhaps by actual grace, which he may receive as the result of having prayed and received the sacraments in the past, or because he co-operated with grace in some earlier temptation, or showed himself grateful for past favors, or finally as a token of God's love and solicitude, either turns to God in fear and trembling, and asks His help by prayer, or he dilly-dallies with the temptation. For, as the central figure in the conflict, he can not hold himself neutral, neither can he conquer so terrible a temptation by his own unaided strength; this, his instinct, his

prudence, and perhaps his past experience assure him. If he prays he adopts the motive, plan, and purpose of God by that very cry for help, and surrenders himself to the influence of grace, or places the *proximate condition* for God and His angels to espouse his cause. If, then, he does what he can, God will enable him to do what he can not do of himself, as the Council of Trent teaches, that is, triumph over the temptation.

But if that man does not turn to God in that temptation with promptness and decision, the forces of evil will grow in strength and press the assault to a crisis. Even then grace will still triumph, if, by humble prayer, that man gives God the opportunity of taking him under His protection. In fact, the God of goodness and love actually seems to plead for this occasion by the voice of that man's conscience, by the influence of his guardian angel, and even by the inspiration of grace. "Can you think of betraying Me for so base a gratification as the flesh, the world, or the devil can offer?" He asks. "I made you to my own image and likeness. I have put in your heart a longing which I alone can satisfy. Oh, do not give up your right to heaven, do not damn your soul to hell! Despise the pleasures of sense, at least when

they conflict with the nobler pleasures of the soul. Fear not the ridicule of the world; the world has nothing in common with Me. Do not give your soul to Satan. Satan does not love you; he hates you, and he seeks your ruin. But I love you. I have loved you with an everlasting love. I have proven my love for you by giving you all you have." "Behold My hands and My feet," the Saviour says. "They were pierced with nails for your sake. Will you nail Me anew to the cross by committing mortal sin? Behold, My Heart is open to receive you, and to shelter you from all danger. Do not, then, betray Me like Judas! Do not prefer Barabbas to Me, as did the Jews of old. Be not incredulous, but believing."

If still that man neglects to pray, he will lose in the conflict, even though he had seemed confirmed in grace. Blinded by passion, and weakened by the assault, he is now left to his own strength by that God who said: "He that loveth danger shall perish in it" (*Eccles.* iii. 27). In this condition he finally yields to the temptation, and deliberately prefers a sinful gratification to the love and friendship of God. By this free determination that man, once just, but now the slave of Satan and a child of perdition, places the *proximate occasion* for an action

that not only offends God grievously, but forces Him as the First Cause and Prime Mover to co-operate. For man's liberty consists precisely in determining the *quality* of his choice. As long as he has life he must act; he can not remain neutral or inactive. In proportion as he freely conforms to the motive, plan, and purpose of God, he advances toward perfection. In proportion as he follows his own, he deifies himself. In proportion as he drifts through life, he surrenders himself to his passions.

III. THE PERMANENT ASSISTANCE GOD GIVES MAN.

The permanent assistance which God gives man to work out his destiny is partly of the natural order, partly of the supernatural order, and partly of a mixed nature. As nature is the foundation for grace or supernatural assistance, all three are usually united in actual life. For the sake of clearness we shall consider them individually. The natural assistance which God has ordained for man consists of an innate desire for an infinite good, of an innate desire of truth and virtue, and the parental influence of instruction and good example. The assistance of a mixed nature are conscience and

vocation. We call them mixed, because, though founded in nature, they attain their maturity only when enlightened and strengthened by grace. The permanent assistance which God gives man in the supernatural order are: the Ministry of the Church, the Communion of Saints, Sanctifying Grace, the Infused Virtues, and the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

1. *The Desire of Happiness.*

God implanted a desire for happiness so deeply in the human heart that not even the ravages of original sin have destroyed it. It is found in every heart. It impels man ever onward. It gives him no lasting peace, no permanent rest. We may consider this desire of happiness in itself, in its influence on man's actions, and in its bearing on man's relationship to God.

Considered in itself this desire of happiness is a vague longing for an endless possession and fruition of an infinite good under circumstances so congenial that it can be found only in heaven.

When considered in its influence on man's life this desire for happiness is the general motive-power of his actions, for ultimately both saint and sinner seek their happiness in all they do, even though the means they employ or the

methods they follow are diametrically opposed to one another. Besides being the motive-power of human action this innate desire of happiness is also the soul of man's moral habits. It impels him towards God, the infinite Good, in the practice of virtue, and gives man peace of heart in proportion as he exerts himself. When misguided by an erroneous judgment or influenced by passion, it likewise hurries man on the way to perdition, and warns him by the sting of remorse the farther he strays away from the Infinite Good. And, as reaction is equal to action, this same desire of happiness likewise influences the repentant soul in his detestation, contrition, and atonement for sin.

This innate desire of happiness is the natural means by which God prompts man to action, and draws him toward Himself. In the supernatural order it becomes the way along which grace conducts man to the greatest measure of happiness on earth and to the possession and fruition of the infinite Good in heaven.

2. *The Desire of Truth and Virtue.*

We have just seen how man's innate longing for happiness or universal longing for what is good survived original sin and impels man to action. Now, as every good is essentially

true and beautiful, this impulse for happiness or possession and enjoyment of the good becomes at the same time a desire for truth and virtue. Hence, this desire for truth and virtue originally implanted in human nature likewise survives the corruption of original sin. The human mind was made for the enjoyment of truth and the human heart for the adornment of virtue. Desire of truth makes man sincere, desire of virtue makes him a lover of moral beauty. By the cultivation of these two qualities man at the same time satisfies his innate longing for the possession and enjoyment of what is good, has the greatest amount of human happiness, and becomes acceptable to God. By deliberately acting contrary to them, he loses his peace of mind and heart, becomes unfit for the elevating influence of grace, and deserves the condemnation which Jesus pronounced upon the conduct of the Pharisees.

3. *Parental Influence.*

Another natural assistance which God has ordained for man is parental influence. During the most impressionable period of his life man is dependent on his parents. Even though these be far from perfect themselves, they will instinctively teach the child the best

they can both by word and by example. To make this good influence of parents deep and lasting, God has ordained that the child, with its innate desire of truth and virtue, should unconsciously idealize its parents at this stage of its existence as the personification of knowledge, wisdom, and virtue.

As the child advances in life devoted parents will shield its growth in truth and virtue by protecting it against contamination from playmates and companions. In proportion as the child passes from the influence of its parents it will be sustained in its desire of truth and virtue by the memory of their teaching and example, and strengthened against the evil influence of the world by the dictates of a delicate conscience.

4. *Conscience.*

Conscience is the dictate of reason regarding the morality of human actions. It proclaims the law of God engraven on every human heart. Though essentially a gift of the natural order, conscience attains its full accuracy and vigor only when enlightened and strengthened by grace. Conscience is the application of man's innate desire of truth and virtue to the circumstances of daily life. It judges of the goodness, the truth, and the

beauty, or the moral integrity of an action, and urges man to do the right and to avoid the wrong. In proportion as its dictates are obeyed does conscience impart to man a sweetness or peace of heart, which is the assurance that he has taken another step towards God, the infinite Good. On the other hand, the more its dictates are ignored, the more will conscience rebuke man and fill him with remorse. It will give him no rest until he returns to a normal cultivation of his innate desire of happiness by the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue.

If a child has been taught to love truth and virtue through the influence of its parents, it will experience great joy at the dawn of reason, when the dictates of its own conscience will confirm its veneration of father and mother. But, if they were remiss in its education or brought it up in evil ways, it will not only condemn them in later life but will have great difficulty in establishing true standards of right and wrong, and may even labor under a serious disadvantage throughout life.

5. *Vocation.*

By His wise and benign foresight God has made provision for the minutest details enter-

ing into the economy of the creation, government, and consummation of the world. In His universal plan He has not only provided a place for every creature, but has made every creature to fill its particular place in the universal plan. God has, besides, implanted in every creature a tendency to work out its destiny in that place. In man this tendency is an inclination of his innate desire of good to seek his happiness in a particular state in life. In the supernatural order this inclination is called vocation.

When a soul has had the advantages of a Catholic home, and has remained true to the dictates of conscience in childhood, its innate love of truth gradually imbues it with a spirit of faith, while its love of virtue becomes instrumental in preserving its purity of heart. As it advances on the journey of life, the light of grace sooner or later makes it conscious of its preference for a particular state in life, and inclines it to seek its happiness by serving God in that state.

Every Catholic should seek and follow his vocation for two reasons. In the first place it is the state in life for which God has fitted and destined a person. In the second place it is the state in which God has destined to bestow on that person the benefits of His special provi-

dence, and the full measure of His grace. For these reasons, also, a soul may sanctify herself with an ordinary good will when following her vocation, whereas an heroic good will may not suffice, if she, like the young man in the Gospel, turns away from her vocation with full deliberation.

To be happy in any vocation man must be actuated by a spirit of faith in following it, cheerfully make the sacrifices his state in life demands, and pray perseveringly that God may sustain him, guide him, and crown his efforts with final perseverance.

6. *The Ministry of the Church.*

In the ministry of the Church man receives the supernatural assistance established by Jesus Christ. In holy Baptism he is cleansed from original sin, made a child of God, a member of Christ's mystical body, and coheir with Him to heaven. He is given divine certainty of the truths he must believe, and the virtues he must practise, and the means he must use to attain happiness by knowing, loving, and serving God. Through the ministry of the Church he is enabled to offer God a worthy sacrifice, while his soul is freed from the malady of sin, nourished with the Bread of Life, and filled with the

gifts of the Holy Ghost. Here he receives sympathy, counsel, and encouragement in health, becomes the object of the Church's tenderest solicitude in sickness and in death, is refreshed in purgatory, and helped to the beatitude of the elect.

7. *The Communion of Saints.*

Through the Communion of Saints God gives man a twofold assistance: the guidance of an angel guardian, and the protection of patron saints. The guardian angels exercise their power negatively, by protecting man against the influence of Satan, the allurements and scorn of the world, and his own pride and sensuality. They exercise their power positively by effacing the memory of dangerous impressions from his imagination, by causing salutary impressions to be deep and lasting, by giving man a relish for spiritual things, and by these means to work on his innate longing for happiness, to incline and stimulate him in the practice of virtue.

The saints in heaven retain a personal interest in what concerned them specially while on earth, and in what has since been specially dedicated to them. Thus, Mary, as Mother of the Redeemer, is personally interested in the sal-

vation of all for whom she sacrificed her divine Son. Thus, also, is St. Joseph, the head of the Holy Family, the natural protector of the Church on earth, which is composed of the brethren of Christ and the children of Mary. So, likewise, is St. Michael, the standard-bearer of the good angels, appropriately commissioned the guardian spirit of the Catholic Church. Besides, individual dioceses, cities, parishes, and persons are placed by Holy Church under the special protection of particular saints, that they, who are united to us by divine charity, may enable us by their influence and example to find happiness in pleasing God in all things.

8. *Sanctifying Grace.*

Sanctifying grace is a divine quality, effected and maintained in the soul by the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, which imparts to it a supernatural life and distinction. As the incandescent lamp, when charged with electricity, radiates light and heat, so the soul, when born again of water and the Holy Ghost, becomes bright and pleasing in the sight of God. And as the incandescent lamp assumes the qualities of electricity when charged with it, so sanctifying grace imparts a divine quality to the soul. This divine quality, as St. Peter

says, makes us partakers of the divine nature (2 *Peter* i. 4). For, as man by his supernatural destiny receives the potentiality of union with God, and by his innate craving for happiness is impelled towards God, so sanctifying grace gives him divine life or makes it possible for him to co-operate with God. It makes it possible for man to be actuated by the love of God, to promote His glory, to do His holy will, and thus to be just and holy in His sight as God is just and holy by nature, and eventually, as heir to the kingdom of heaven, to see and to taste how good He is, even as God now sees and delights in His ineffable perfection.

Sanctifying grace is likewise called habitual grace because it inheres permanently in the very nature of the soul and makes it a worthy temple of the living God. It is essentially distinct from the infused virtues, however, which inhere in the faculties of the soul and make it possible for man to act in the supernatural order.

Sanctifying grace is also called the grace of justification, because it frees man from the slavery of sin and Satan, gives him spiritual life, and makes him a child of God. It is obtained by a worthy reception of the sacraments of Baptism and Penance, or, when that is im-

possible, by perfect sorrow for sin, united to an ardent desire to do all that God has ordained for man's salvation. To receive it an adult should ordinarily (1) make acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition; (2) have the desire of receiving this grace; (3) and form the resolution of beginning a new life and of keeping the commandments. The peculiarities of sanctifying grace are (1) that without a special revelation no man can have divine certainty of possessing it; (2) that it is increased at every act of virtue; (3) that it is lost by every mortal sin.

As God is the Author of sanctifying grace, so is He also the efficient cause of its increase, as He is indeed of the entire spiritual life. The increase of sanctifying grace consists in its taking deeper root in the soul, or in a more intimate adhesion to the nature of the soul. It is effected by God in proportion and to the extent that man, by self-discipline and surrender to God, becomes more and more submissive to the influence of grace in the practice of virtue.

9. *The Divine Adoption.*

The divine adoption is a relationship established by God between man and the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. By this relation-

ship man receives God the Father as his spiritual Father, God the Son as his elder Brother, and God the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier of his soul. When man is in the state of grace this relationship makes him the beloved child of the heavenly Father, the coheir with the Son to heaven, and the living temple of the Holy Ghost.

To live in accordance with this relationship man should cultivate (1) a filial confidence in the goodness, love, and mercy of his heavenly Father; (2) a brotherly love and devotion towards Jesus Christ, who earned for him every blessing; (3) and an undying good will towards the Holy Ghost by co-operating in the work of his sanctification.

10. *The Sacraments.*

The sacraments are fountains of grace established by Jesus Christ. There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. They supply the seven spiritual wants of mankind, which are: (1) spiritual life; (2) the perfection of spiritual life; (3) nourishment for the spiritual life; (4) a remedy for spiritual disease and death; (5) special provision for the journey to eternity;

(6) authority and strength to minister in the name of Christ; (7) special grace to bring up children for heaven.

Baptism and Penance give sanctifying grace, while the others increase it in the soul. All the sacraments, besides, confer sacramental grace, which is a right to those actual graces that are necessary to attain the end for which Our Lord instituted each sacrament.

11. *The Infused Virtues.*

The supernatural virtues which God imparts to the soul with sanctifying grace are the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the moral virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. The infused virtues elevate man's faculties to a divine plane, the theological virtues enabling man to unite himself to God, and the moral virtues to act in harmony with Him. Thus faith empowers man to view the economy of God's work from the true, immutable, eternal standpoint of his heavenly Father, while hope gives him the confidence and courage necessary to face the problems of time and eternity as a child of God, and charity helps him to live in union with God amid all the labors and trials of life. In the same way prudence enables man to take coun-

sel, to judge, and to determine by the light of faith, justice to be fair with God, his neighbor and himself, fortitude to labor and endure as a follower of his crucified Master, and temperance to keep his place at all times while pursuing his destiny according to the plan of God.

There is a threefold difference between the natural cardinal virtues and the infused moral virtues, which supernaturalize them. (1) The former man can acquire by his unaided will; the latter are always the gifts of God. (2) The former man may practise for their own sake; the latter must be animated by love for God. (3) The former he can develop by a persevering good will, the latter, God intensifies in proportion as man places the proximate occasion, or gives Him the opportunity, by trying to act in harmony with Him.

12. *The Gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are certain habits infused by God to facilitate the operations of the infused virtues, and thereby to sustain man when acting in union with Him. They consist in a kind of spiritual instinct which enables man to detect the promptings of actual grace readily, and to co-operate cheerfully with them. They are the crowning grace of God's

permanent assistance to man, and bring him into perfect harmony with his heavenly Father.

There are seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. The first four perfect the Christian mind, the last three endow the Christian will. Wisdom enables man to know and take delight in God. Like a luminous flame understanding sheds light on the truths of faith and the mysteries of religion. Knowledge enables man to rise to God by means of His creatures, while counsel points out the best means of union with God by doing His holy will in all things. Fortitude enables man to triumph over every obstacle to his union with the Infinite Good. Piety makes him childlike towards God, and fraternal to the rest of mankind. And, finally, the fear of the Lord cultivates so delicate a conscience in him, that he will avoid even the shadow of evil lest he tarnish his soul and offend the God of infinite love.

As St. John saw "the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits" (*Apoc.* xxii. 2), so St. Paul assures us the Holy Spirit produces twelve fruits in every soul that co-operates with His gifts. These fruits are so many steps on our way to union with God by which "the Spirit himself

giveth testimony to our spirit, that we are the sons of God" (*Rom.* viii. 16). "The fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity" (*Gal.* v. 22-23).

IV. THE TRANSIENT ASSISTANCE GOD GIVES MAN.

Besides the permanent assistance, which we have just considered, God also gives man transient assistance on the pilgrimage of life. The object of this divine assistance is to aid man in performing supernatural actions. This transient assistance is divided into the dispensations of Divine Providence and actual grace. The former gives man the opportunity to do the good God requires of him, the latter gives him the necessary help to perform it.

1. *The Dispensations of Divine Providence.*

The dispensations of Divine Providence are the application of God's paternal solicitude to the details of man's life. In a wide sense they embrace both the natural guidance of Providence as well as the supernatural economy of grace or predestination. In a more restricted sense, however, the dispensations of

Divine Providence consist of the natural combination of minute circumstances, which fill in the details of man's life, and which God positively ordains or passively tolerates, and by means of which He gives man the opportunity to do that good which He expects of him. Taken in this sense the dispensations of Divine Providence are sometimes also called external graces, though in reality they only furnish the occasion for God to give man actual grace.

We may consider the dispensations of Divine Providence in their universal application to mankind, in their special application to every individual soul, and in their most special application to those souls whom God has destined to fill a particular place in His divine plan. The general dispensations of Divine Providence establish man in his place in God's plan and ordain his relationship to the rest of the world. The special, as well as the most special, dispensations of Divine Providence conduct all of good will to that state in life for which God has destined them, provide them with the special qualifications necessary, and give them the opportunities necessary to do God's holy will in all things.

The dispensations of Divine Providence

must permit involuntary temptations as opportunities for practising virtue. They co-operate positively, and sometimes marvelously, in man's virtuous actions. And though they must tolerate some sinful deeds, they frequently use even these to teach man mistrust of self, confidence in God, and the necessity of making persevering efforts to work out his salvation.

2. *Actual Grace.*

Actual grace is a virtuous impulse which God gives man to act in the supernatural order. As a spark of electricity imparts light, warmth, and energy, so actual grace illumines the mind, inspires the will, and heals the wounds of sin. It *illumines* the mind to see the truth, the good, the moral beauty, as well as the opportunity of doing something pleasing to God, the infinite Good, by a particular virtuous action. It *inspires* or moves the will, already inclined to good in general by its innate desire of happiness, to embrace this opportunity. And by its energy it *heals* the wounds of sin, that may impede or prevent man from performing this particular act of virtue, and, if he is not in sanctifying grace, it supernaturalizes him for the time and to the extent necessary for him to ask God's help and by means of prayer to obtain

every other divine aid necessary for him to know, love, and serve God.

Chronologically actual grace is divided into *stimulating* and *co-operating*. The first virtuous impulse which God gives man in the supernatural order is called stimulating grace, because it awakens man to the opportunity, and inclines him to an act of virtue. The second virtuous impulse is called co-operating grace, because, as soon as the will *freely* yields to the suggestion of stimulating grace by inclining to this particular virtuous action, God grants an additional grace, which co-operates in man's action by sustaining, confirming, and crowning his efforts with success.

In the order of causation stimulating grace is called *remotely sufficient* grace because it suffices to enable man to pray, and through prayer to obtain every other grace. In the same sense co-operating grace is also called *proximately sufficient* grace because it is always sufficient to enable man to perform the action for which it is given. When given to a person of good will it may be so *efficacious* by the intensity of its light and impulse as not only to sustain and confirm his good will, but even efficaciously to determine and morally to impel him to a particular act of virtue.

Finally, stimulating grace is sometimes called *a light* and *an inspiration* of the Holy Ghost because it always prompts man to act in accordance with the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Remotely sufficient grace corresponds to the general dispensations of Divine Providence, which God extends to all mankind. Proximately sufficient grace and efficacious grace, on the other hand, correspond to the special dispensations of Divine Providence, and are granted partly because God destined a person for a particular place in His plan, but never unless — and mostly because that person is following the promptings of grace in the choice of his vocation or is endeavoring to fulfil the duties of his state in life conscientiously.

There are five properties of actual grace that deserve our special consideration. They are: Necessity, Gratuity, Universality, Inequality, and Efficacy.

a. Grace is necessary in a fourfold way. (1) Man needs the light of grace to find the truth. Though he can learn many things in the natural order by persevering application, he needs the help of God to master all human science. "For the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many

things" (*Wis.* ix. 15). In the supernatural order actual grace must enlighten man's mind and prompt his will before he can accept the truths of divine revelation. "No man can come to Me," says the Saviour, "except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" (*John* vi. 44). (2) Man needs actual grace to do good. It is true that in the natural order man can of himself do some good, but he can not keep the entire natural law without the grace of God. Much less can he of himself do good supernaturally, that is in a way meritorious for heaven. For the Saviour says: "Without Me you can do nothing" (*John* xv. 5). (3) Man needs the grace to overcome temptation. By his unaided strength man can overcome the lesser, but not the graver temptations of life. "As I knew I could not otherwise be continent, except the Lord gave it: I went to the Lord, and besought Him" (*Wis.* viii. 21). Hence, man needs the help of actual grace to avoid mortal sin, and though he can avoid some venial faults of himself, he requires the most special help of God to avoid all deliberate venial sin. (4) Finally, man needs the grace of God to persevere in doing good. Perseverance may be considered as temporal and as final.

In either case grace is necessary to persevere. Fidelity to one grace neither confirms man in grace, nor ends his earthly trial. Actual grace is as necessary for the second step in the spiritual life as for the first. Man will receive it at every step in proportion as he is faithful to grace in the present, grateful for the graces received in the past, and makes use of the means of grace.

Final perseverance, or perseverance in the grace of God till death, is a special favor which can be obtained only by persevering prayer. Three things unite to produce final perseverance: sanctifying grace, the special dispensations of Divine Providence, and a chain of actual graces. Man obtains the first through Baptism, sacramental absolution, perfect contrition and perfect love of God. He secures the second by embracing the state in life to which God has called him, by fulfilling the duties of his state in life, by submitting to the guidance of Providence, and by obeying the inspirations of grace. Though man can never merit a single grace, much less the chain of graces necessary to persevere in God's friendship until death, he can obtain this priceless grace by fidelity and persevering prayer.

b. Grace is always a gratuitous gift of God. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (*Rom.* ix. 16). St. Augustine, in writing against certain heretics of his day who denied the gratuity of grace, remarks: "Why is it called grace? Because it is given gratis. And why is it given gratis? Not because your merits precede it, but because the blessings of God precede you." From this we see that even the good dispositions whereby we submit ourselves to the influence of grace are not to be ascribed to our natural good will, but to a preceding grace which has enlightened the mind and inclined the will toward God.

c. Grace is universal. God gives sufficient grace for salvation to every one. According to the parable in the Gospel, He gives every servant at least one talent. Man is ordinarily prepared for this talent by parental influence and the ministry of the Church. Where this external assistance is wanting God brings man to a knowledge of the truths necessary for salvation by the special guidance of His Providence, and stimulates his mind and will by actual grace. If man, then, follows the dictates of his conscience in all sincerity, the influence of

grace and the dispensations of Divine Providence will conduct him eventually to the knowledge of the truth and the possession of all the other blessings of a child of God. Hence, St. Thomas teaches that if necessary God would send an angel to show a person of good will the way to heaven.

In the distribution of grace (1) God gives actual grace in sufficient measure to be truly and relatively sufficient for all to keep out of mortal sin. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able" (1 *Cor.* x. 13). (2) By the special dispensation of His Providence God makes the circumstances of time and place favorable at least once for even the most hardened sinner to accept the grace to pray, and follows this up with the grace of conversion in proportion as the sinner cooperates. (3) God not only offers but actually gives sufficient grace for salvation to all sinners. (4) To the unbeliever God gives at least the grace to pray, and, as we have seen, follows this up with other graces in proportion as they are appreciated. (5) Even for the children that die without Baptism either from some natural cause or through the fault of parents God had prepared sufficient grace. For "God wills all

men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 *Tim.* ii. 4) and "Christ died for all" (2 *Cor.* v. 15).

d. The inequality in the distribution of grace arises from a twofold source, the inequality of glory to which God has destined persons, and the inequality of good will with which different persons and nations co-operate with grace. As there are various choirs of angels in heaven, so God has destined souls to different degrees of sanctity and glory. Practically speaking, however, the inequality of good will in mankind accounts most for the inequality in the distribution of grace. For, among all mankind the blessed Virgin Mary alone had the good will to co-operate perfectly with the grace of God every moment of her life, while even one of the Apostles was eternally lost on account of his bad will.

The fact is that the best of us have squandered enough grace to make saints out of the worst of us if they had eagerly received and co-operated generously and perseveringly with it. In the universality of grace we considered the least God can do in promoting the sanctification of mankind. The most that He will do to bring all to conform to His divine plan may be estimated from the work of the creation and

the work of the redemption, where He did all that an all wise and all good God could do to ensure the sanctification of all of good will. As God asked about His conduct toward the Jews of old, so He can justly ask of every soul that is lost: "What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?" (*Is.* v. 4.)

e. The efficacy of grace likewise corresponds partly to the special design of God, as in the conversion of St. Paul, and partly to the special co-operation of man to a previous grace, as in the conversion of St. Ignatius Loyola. In fact, though "the heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord" (*Prov.* xxi. 1) God does not grant an efficacious grace to a person whose mind is insincere, or whose will pertinacious. Thus, St. Paul, though laboring under a serious delusion, was sincere and zealous when he arrived at the gate of Damascus. Thus, also, the good thief was evidently sincere and of good will, and probably never heard the Saviour mentioned favorably, till he saw Him dying at his side. If St. Augustine, St. Bernard, St. Ignatius, and countless others, whom God had destined to a prominent position in His plan, had turned against the stimulating influence of the first grace they received, even as Pontius

Pilate deliberately turned away from the truth, they might have become reprobates, instead of great saints with a special mission on earth.

Efficacious grace in no way destroys free will, but perfects good will by giving "the increase" (1 *Cor.* iii. 6), by crowning the sincere mind and honest effort of man with efficient and infallible success. As grace always harmonizes with nature, efficacious grace influences man morally by enlightening his mind so clearly on the truth, the goodness, and the beauty of a particular virtuous action, and by stimulating his will so palpably towards it through his innate desire of happiness, through fear of the Lord, through hope of reward, through esteem for virtue, and through love for God, that his sluggish will embraces it with a determination that overcomes all obstacles and is crowned with success.

As efficacious grace, so essential to salvation and sanctification, is obtained by prayer, we should concentrate our efforts on using the means of grace and co-operating with the same. For, thereby we ensure not only our election but also our predestination, and may be privileged to receive the greater graces which others have misused, as Matthias succeeded to the apostolate of Judas Iscariot.

SECTION II.

THE DIVINE INFLUENCE IN SELF-DENIAL — PASSIVE PURGATION.

The divine influence is the efficient cause of Christian self-denial. It enlightens the mind on the Way, the Truth and the Life. It enkindles the good desires and suggests the good resolutions of the heart, and thus awakens, stimulates, and sustains that good will whereby man freely surrenders himself to God. Even though his spiritual nature has grown languid, his faculties weakened, and his affections paralyzed by the rebellion and dominion of his passions before man surrenders to God, the Holy Ghost is willing to help him even as our blessed Saviour cured all kinds of human infirmity while on earth. By the special dispensations of His Providence and the stimulating influence of His grace, God first fills the soul that surrenders to His influence with the rapture of sensible devotion. As an anæsthetic renders man insensible to pain, so sensible devotion fills the soul with such transcending pleasure

that even amid pain and sacrifice it can exclaim with St. Peter at the Transfiguration: "Lord, it is good for us to be here" (*Matt.* xvii. 4). While man is thus encouraged the divine influence prompts and sustains him in subjugating his lower nature to the dictates of reason, and his reason to the guidance of Faith.

I. THE GRACE OF SENSIBLE DEVOTION.

1. *Its Nature — Spiritual Sweetness.*

Sensible devotion is that accidental feature of man's promptitude in God's service which arises from the allurement of grace and fills the heart with so great a measure of spiritual sweetness that it floods his sensitive nature. It is to the soul what the fondest caresses of a loving mother are to a child, or what the privilege of resting his head on the bosom of Jesus was to the beloved disciple St. John at the Last Supper.

The grace of God operates in a threefold way to produce this spiritual sweetness in the soul. It enlightens the mind so clearly about a certain truth as to expel all lurking hesitation and force its assent by the brightness of its light. It warms the heart, that perhaps had been chilled by the coldness and hypocrisy of the world, with such tender affection that it melts like the

snow under the influence of the glowing sun. And it strengthens the soul with its divine influence so that, like a giant, it rises above every obstacle and accomplishes with facility what was impossible before. Thus enlightened, inflamed, and strengthened the soul says with St. Augustine: "These have made the sacrifice, those have done it; why can not I?"

Under the influence of sensible devotion man not only laments his past folly and weeps over his sins, but begins the work of reparation and reconstruction with an alacrity and despatch that corresponds with the holy enthusiasm with which he is filled. With the Royal Psalmist he may now exclaim: "Who will give me the wings of a dove, and I will fly and be at rest?" (*Ps.* liv. 7.)

2. *The Preparation — Sincere Reflection.*

"With desolation is the whole land made desolate," said the prophet, "because there is none that considereth in the heart" (*Jer.* xii. 11). In revealing the cause of the lamentable condition of the Jews before the Babylonian captivity, the prophet touched on the source of all religious indifference and infidelity. God has engraven the essential truths of religion on our very nature. He has also implanted in

every heart a longing for what is good. Fascinated by the vanities of the world, however, many a soul yields to the promptings of corrupt nature, and, by pouring herself out on the things around her through the senses, easily becomes the slave of sensuality and worldly pride. For a longer or shorter time she seeks in vain for happiness in the pursuit of the follies of life until some keen disappointment brings about a revulsion of feeling. Providence seizes upon this critical opportunity to incline the soul to God. If she listens to the promptings of grace as they emphasize the emptiness of life, and the necessity of looking elsewhere for real happiness, the necessary truth of religion will appeal as vital questions to her sincerity and good-will. In proportion as these are welcomed, will grace enkindle the desire of nobler things in the soul until, despising the world and disgusted with self, she begins to fear the punishment of hell, and to realize the brevity of time, the reality of eternity, and the uncertainty of death. Like the Prodigal Son, the soul of good-will then begins to retrace her steps, and she finally casts herself into the arms of her merciful Saviour to seek that happiness which He alone can give. Having learned the fickleness and inconstancy of human nature by

bitter experience, like St. Peter, she now cries out with Bartimeus: "Rabboni, that I may see!" (*Mark* x. 51). With the Publican she prays: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (*Luke* xviii. 13). In all confidence she says with the leper: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (*Matt.* viii. 2). With the young man in the Gospel she asks: "Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" (*Matt.* xix. 16.) Encouraged and aided by grace that soul finally resolves to put off the old man with his error and corruption and put on the new man who according to God "is created in justice and holiness of truth" (*Eph.* iv. 22-24).

3. *The Occasion — Christian Resolution.*

"The sluggard willeth and willeth not" (*Prov.* xiii. 4). The saints tell us that hell is paved with the vain desires of the sluggard. Our Saviour assures us on the other hand that a persevering, practical resolution is necessary for salvation. "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord," He says, "shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom" (*Matt.* viii. 2). A universal desire of good is inborn in man. Particular de-

sires are forced upon him by reason, passion, and grace. Their mere presence or absence reflects little of the quality of his will. But the resolution to be good, to do good, to save his soul, to use the means of grace, to do violence to himself by making the necessary sacrifices, these are not only the effect of grace, but also the evidence of his sincere good-will.

In proportion to the integrity of his Christian resolution is also man's deliberate surrender to the influence of grace. And in proportion to his co-operation with grace will he pass more and more under its influence until it finally floods his soul so completely that even his physical nature begins to glow with it.

4. *The Effect — Good-Will.*

The effects of sensible devotion are most evident to the soul who receives this grace. Before she was wearily groping her way in the darkness; now she is hurrying along in the brightness of noon-day. Before she was harassed with doubt and anxiety, but under the stimulating influence of sensible devotion they have vanished like so many phantoms. Before she was oppressed with sadness that brought her to the verge of despair, now she is joyous and filled with delight. Before her heart was

famished by feeding on the vain desires of the world, now it overflows with joy at the thought of the Infinite Good. Before that soul was weak, irresolute, inactive, a slave of her lower nature, a victim of every evil circumstance, a mere thing drifting on the stream of time. But now she stands erect in all her dignity and independence of a child of God. Her weakness is cured; her irresolution has vanished. Reason has again been enthroned, and the will made mistress of rebellious nature. As that soul looks back over her misspent past, she is filled with regret. As she peers down the vista of the unknown future she is filled with alarm. But, as she looks at the present — her concrete present — she is spurred to action by the words of the Saviour: "Work while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (*John* ix. 4). "Be thou faithful until death: and I will give thee the crown of life" (*Apoc.* ii. 10).

With a holy enthusiasm, a revelation to herself, she begins to sanctify the present moment and thereby to lay up treasures in heaven. Under the impulse of her ardor she is cheerful and generous in the service of the Lord.

5. *The Danger — Delusions.*

The danger to the soul, accompanying the

grace of sensible devotion, arises from her proclivity to pride and self-love. Unless she be humble and strong in faith she will easily be deceived regarding the nature of her power and the cause of her spiritual progress. By taking the credit of her change of mind and heart to herself instead of giving due honor to God she is puffed up with pride; and when she does this, even unconsciously, she puts herself at variance with God. For "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (*Jas.* iv. 6). Thus her momentary advancement may become the occasion of her greater fall. Besides, as pride begets a false sense of security and self-sufficiency, she may disregard the danger of temptation and neglect the means of grace, and by so doing fall into many other sins. How many have said to the Master with St. Peter: "Yea, though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee" (*Matt.* xxvi. 35), and have gone foolishly into the voluntary occasion of sin and fallen miserably. Even though the Holy Ghost solemnly assures them that "he that loveth danger shall perish in it" (*Ecclus.* iii. 27), self-confident souls persist in learning their dependence on God by sad experience.

The grace of sensible devotion likewise gives occasion to the delusion of self-love. This is a

species of idolatry that keeps the soul from knowing her real self, and introduces her to a state of spiritual stagnation where the use of the means of grace becomes an empty formality and progress in virtue and merit an utter impossibility. Instead of being actuated by love of God or charity towards their neighbor the slaves of self-love seek their own will in all things, and thereby class themselves among those of whom the Saviour says: "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward" (*Matt.* vi. 5).

II. PURIFICATION OF SENSITIVE NATURE.

1. *The Nature of This Purification.*

In the beginning a mother nurses her infant with the tenderest affection, but grows less demonstrative in her devotion as it advances in age; so, in the beginning of a soul's conversion, God fills her with the sweetness of sensible devotion, but changes His treatment when she learns to walk by faith. Precisely because the mother is truly devoted to the child does she gradually feed it on a more nourishing diet and teach it to stand and walk alone. For the same reason God changes His treatment of the soul

as she advances in the life of grace. To preserve her from the delusions of pride and self-love and to encourage her to walk steadfastly by faith, He withdraws the light and sweetness of sensible devotion from time to time and subjects her to various trials. For, as the winds and storms of Spring stimulate vegetation and cause it to send its roots deep into the ground, so the trials which Providence sends or permits ground the soul in humility and attach her intimately to God.

2. *The Necessity of This Purification.*

Many reasons may be advanced to show the necessity of purifying the sensitive nature in transforming carnal man into a child of God. (1) It is necessary to subordinate man's sensitive nature to his superior nature and make it concur and co-operate in man's union with God. (2) The grace of sensible devotion is an unsafe guide for life because it can be counterfeited by Satan to the deception and ruin of the soul. (3) In fact man can not easily tell whether sensible devotion springs from a natural alacrity, a momentary disposition, a temptation, or from the grace of God. (4) According to the plan of God sensible devotion

is intended to introduce man to Faith, the only safe guide on the journey to eternity.

3. *The Effects of This Purification.*

The hope of reward renders labor and suffering tolerable if it does not convert them into pleasure. A negative and a positive advantage arises from the purification of the sensitive nature. The first consists (1) in the removal of those imperfections by which the soul tends to the seven capital sins; (2) in freeing the soul from many vain imaginations and delusions; (3) in freeing the soul from various delusions of pride and self-love, and giving her a more accurate knowledge of herself and her natural powers.

The positive advantages produced by the purification of the sensitive nature are (1) the subjugation of the sensitive nature to the intellectual powers; (2) the acquisition of a clearer knowledge of God and of self; (3) the grounding of the soul in humility, a virtue most necessary in the spiritual life; (4) making the soul poor in spirit by giving her a holy indifference for material things; (5) establishing the soul in patience, perseverance, and conformity to the divine will; (6) strengthening the soul by wean-

ing her from sensible devotion; (7) bringing the soul more intimately into the presence of God, and prompting her to serve Him with a sincere mind and a pure heart; (8) granting her peace and tranquillity of mind; (9) and imparting a promptitude to practise the infused theological and moral virtues.

4. *Signs of This Purification.*

When a soul experiences the absence of sensible devotion and is unconscious of any infidelity to grace through pride or tepidity, and is otherwise in normal health, she may reasonably infer that God is sending her this first trial in the spiritual life: (1) by the fact that she has lost her relish for, and consolation in the service of God. For, when God purifies the natural cognition and affections of man, He will not permit any other cause to counteract His divine influence by sensible delight or consolation; (2) by the fact that God always permits some affectionate memory of Him to remain in the soul, whereas when this condition is caused by melancholy or some other natural cause it will obliterate the memory of divine things before it excludes the memory of more proximate material pleasures; (3) by the fact that God withdraws His aid in her accustomed mental prayer. For,

by leading the soul to communicate more directly with Him through her mind and will, her imagination and memory become less operative and cause her some difficulty in adjusting herself to the designs of God. But where this aridity arises from merely natural causes, it is only temporary and will vanish with the removal of the cause.

5. *Counsels on the Purification of Sensitive Nature.*

The soul is in great need of a prudent and kind director when God purifies her sensitive nature. It is then she is in danger of perplexity, of discouragement, of spiritual stagnation, and even of retrogression. In the absence of such a director the following counsels may be of great service to a soul when passing through this ordeal: (1) Beware of fatiguing the mind by vain and useless investigation and exertion, for, where God decrees one thing, you can not effect the contrary and work in harmony with Him. (2) The Saviour exhorted His disciples in time of trial to possess their souls in patience (*Luke* xii. 19). The soul should follow the Saviour's advice in this trial where she needs rest to preserve her peace and tranquillity. (3) As long as a soul is not con-

scious of infidelity to grace she should consider the withdrawal of sensible devotion as a reward of her fidelity to prepare her for greater favors, and not lament it as a punishment for her sins. (4) During this trial the soul will derive much profit from the study of the life and especially the suffering of our divine Saviour. (5) Be faithful to your ordinary pious practices. (6) Be ready to follow the Master to the death of the cross if that be God's holy will. (7) Rest assured that your merit is greatest when conforming to God's will in adversity. (8) "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seeds. But coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves" (*Ps.* cxxv. 5-7).

6. *The Rebellion of Sensitive Nature.*

As reaction is equal to action the dejection of the soul, deprived of sensible devotion, will be proportionate to the good-will she exercised in following the promptings of grace by turning from mental dissipation to a life of recollection, and by advancing from pious sentiments and right reason to a life of practical faith. When Mary lost Jesus in the temple she sought Him sorrowing. Would that all souls followed her example in this trial! By giving way to

dejection the soul encourages the flesh to rebel against the spirit and to oppose weariness to devotion, aridity to a relish for spiritual things, and desolation to the consolations of the spiritual life. Like the beloved disciples that were privileged to accompany the Master, the soul that has tasted the sensible delights of Tabor is expected to watch and pray when she enters Gethsemáni. Prayer and patient endurance alone can save her from this rebellion of fallen nature. To this the Psalmist exhorts her, saying: "Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord" (*Ps.* xxv. 14).

As the Israelites hungered for the flesh-pots of Egypt until they became accustomed to the bread from heaven, so man's rebellious nature makes the higher graces taste insipid when first deprived of sensible devotion. But, as a child gains confidence and strength by patiently advancing on hands and knees, so will the soul be purified and strengthened by patiently enduring this trial. Hence the Wise Man says: "Wait on God with patience; join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end" (*Ecclus.* ii. 3).

7. *The Purification of Sensitive Nature by Temporal Losses.*

As human affections are more easily centered on temporal than on spiritual goods, the purification of sensitive nature is usually perfected by temporal losses. These may be of four kinds: (1) God may deprive man of goods that are external and independent of man, as material possessions, relatives, and friends. Their loss is often felt most keenly. Holy Job gives us an admirable example of resignation when thus afflicted. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord" (*Job* i. 21).

(2) This purification is sometimes accomplished by the loss of honor and power. Honor is the esteem of men, power the influence we have over them. Ambition, or the desire of honor, may be inordinate in three ways: by desiring undue honor, by desiring honors for self without reference to God, and by desiring honors without intending to use them for the good of others. Without the divine aid few souls can die so completely to the esteem of men that they can truly say with St. Francis Assisi: "What I am in the sight of God, that I am, and nothing more!"

(3) The purification of the sensitive nature is often perfected by bodily infirmity. The more personal the privation the more painful it becomes. How many have turned to God in sickness, who had no time for Him before? And how many have been sanctified on a bed of pain in an incredibly short period?

(4) Lastly, this purification is usually perfected by the privation of spiritual consolation. The apostles became sad when they heard that their beloved Master was about to leave them. But He said to them: "It is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you" (*John* xvi. 7). The Holy Ghost can say: "It is expedient for you" to every soul that is more attached to sensible devotion than to the holy will of God. Like the apostles, that soul must be disposed for higher graces by the loss of sensible devotion before she can receive and profit by them.

8. *Purification of Sensitive Nature by Temptations of Satan.*

During the purification of man's sensitive nature by grace Satan sometimes tempts him to pride, to despair, or to impurity. As pride was the cause of his own downfall, he may suggest to the soul that she deserved kinder treatment

at the hands of God. And if this fails to cause her to rebel, he may represent God as a hard and exacting Judge, whom she can never please, and thus lead her on to despair. The selfish soul, however, he usually tempts most severely to sensuality. He may begin by suggesting to her to take care of her health, to enjoy some innocent recreation, and the like. By reviving the memory of dangerous and sinful experiences, and by exciting her imagination he will then tempt her violently to impurity, so that she can not perform her devotions with recollection. If she persists in having recourse to Jesus and Mary, he will fill the soul with groundless fears about the validity of her confessions, and question the integrity of her intentions, the purity of her motives, and the rectitude of her actions. Here the humble, prudent soul will live by faith and submit unreservedly and unquestioningly to the guidance of her director, avoid idleness, think of Jesus, His teaching, and His saints, and place herself unreservedly in the protection of Mary Immaculate, or hide in the wound of the Sacred Heart.

9. *Divine Chastisements.*

Besides the punishment which the indifferent and lukewarm inflict on themselves by their

sins, God sometimes chastises souls to effect their conversion. As a conscientious parent is obliged to go to extremes at times in correcting a wayward child, so our heavenly Father at times treats a soul with severity to make her realize her peril and turn from her evil way. These chastisements consist of temporal misfortunes united with the invitation of grace to be converted while time, grace, and opportunity are at hand. They indicate God's willingness to show mercy on earth and to spare the soul in eternity. When received with a contrite and humble heart divine chastisements lead to sincere conversion, and often mark the beginning of a holy life. As "the earth is full of the mercy of the Lord" (*Ps.* xxxii. 5) He rarely punishes in justice here below, and, when He does so, it is to put an end to sin and scandal that the soul may not have a greater responsibility in eternity.

III. THE PURIFICATION OF INTELLECTUAL NATURE.

1. *The Nature of This Purification.*

The intellectual faculties are the mind and will. Truth is the object of the former, goodness of the latter. As a result of original and

actual sin the mind is darkened by ignorance, prejudice, error, and spiritual blindness, in consequence of which it adopts false principles, is fickle, curious, rash, and obstinate. As a result of the same cause the will inclines inordinately to riches, comforts, pleasures, relatives, friends, honors, self-esteem, self-will, and self-love, instead of seeking the Infinite Good in all things. The passive purification of the intellectual faculties consists in the grace of God removing these effects of sin and in uniting the faculties to God, the Eternal Truth and Infinite Good. This is accomplished by the light and strength of actual grace being concentrated on these faculties in a way that enables a sincere mind and good will to rid themselves of their defects.

When the mind is thus detained and confined to the consideration of its own defects and prevented from rising to God and spiritual things, it is forced to accept the guidance of faith and the dictates of justice. This circumstance humbles its pride, purifies it of vanity, conceit, and worldly ambition, while enabling it to perceive, judge, and act according to the light of the Eternal Truth.

As the faculty of love and the power of self-determination the will undergoes a twofold puri-

fication. Its inordinate desires and attachment are crucified by the sufferings, privations, and disappointments ordained by the special dispensations of Divine Providence, and supplanted by an increasing esteem, affection, and desire for God, the Infinite Good. During the same time the waywardness and stubbornness of the rebellious will surrenders more and more to the Divine Will, until it conforms to the plan of God in all things, and thereby becomes truly free with the liberty of a child of God.

2. *The Necessity of This Purification.*

There is a fourfold reason for this purification of the intellectual faculties: (1) to remove the actual and habitual defects and imperfections of the intellectual faculties, which distract the soul in the service of God by inclining her to created things; (2) to give man capacity for merit by granting him liberty of action; (3) to give man a well-grounded hope of eternal life by actually uniting him with God; (4) to make man acceptable to God by filial reverence, stability, and love.

3. *The Effects of This Purification.*

The purification of the intellectual faculties produces five salutary effects: (1) it gives the

soul a clear, humble, penitent knowledge of herself; (2) it fosters a continual recollection of God's presence; (3) it stimulates the soul in eradicating defects and in cultivating virtue; (4) it stimulates her love for God by giving the soul a clearer knowledge of His infinite goodness, and of His condescending love and mercy; (5) finally, it makes the soul self-possessed, quiet, and strong in the service of God.

4. *Signs of This Purification.*

Effects that can be produced only by the grace of God are sure signs of the passive purification of the intellectual faculties. Among such effects the following may be easily recognized: (1) the presence of a spiritual sweetness and delight as long as the soul is not conscious of sin or serious imperfection; (2) an ardent desire of spiritual progress, which has protected the soul against deliberate faults for a long time; (3) and a spirit of recollection and love for God.

5. *Counsels on the Purification of the Intellectual Faculties.*

In addition to what has already been counseled on the purification of sensitive nature, and which applies equally here, we offer a few spe-

cial suggestions: (1) Pray, pray, pray for conformity to the Divine Will in all things. (2) Be persuaded that temptations and anxieties are an essential part in the purification of the intellectual faculties. (3) Before you can possess the kingdom of heaven you must have a triple claim to it: you must have inherited it, negotiated for it, and taken it by violence, as Jesus teaches in the Gospels. (4) Love of the Cross is essential to security on the way to perfection.

6. *Temptations from Human Nature During This Purification.*

As in the beginning of a soul's conversion the flesh rebels against the spirit, so now human nature gradually re-asserts itself and tempts the soul to slacken its pace and perhaps even to cease doing good. On the one hand, the mind may be ignorant of the soul's progress and the good she is accomplishing, or may not advert to the necessity of making persevering efforts to persevere. On the other hand, the will may be timid, diffident, and fearful of the obstacles that confront it. If the first inclination to pusillanimity be not instantly resisted by faith and confidence in God, a spiritual languor will seize upon the soul. She will then become fastidious

in the practice of virtue and may even be tempted to abandon her vocation or the desire of striving after Christian perfection. The soul should despise such temptations and be persuaded that God loves her and must submit her to these trials to promote her spiritual progress. For, "whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth; and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (*Heb.* xii. 6). And "because thou wast acceptable to God it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (*Tob.* xii. 13).

7. *Trials from the World During This Purification.*

"If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (*John* xv. 19). Man may incur the displeasure of others on account of his faults and suffer the consequences of his conduct without being thereby made more pleasing to God. But when he is hated for a perfect work, it is a sign that he is Christlike and not of the world. In fact St. Paul assures his disciple St. Timothy that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 *Tim.* iii. 12). And the Saviour, in speaking to His disciples on this subject, warned them that "the hour cometh,

that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God" (*John* xvi. 2). We must therefore take it for granted that the trials we endure from others without any fault of our own are permitted by God for our spiritual advancement. In practice we should seek to please God and remain indifferent to the opinions of men.

In fact, if we turn at random to the lives of the saints we shall find that all suffered much from their neighbors. Sometimes the latter were actuated by malice, at other times they were guided by narrow-mindedness, and actuated by blind, fanatical zeal.

The best rule to follow in all trials that others prepare for us is to overcome our adversaries by humility, to restrain them by patience, and to reply to their calumny and detraction by persevering silence.

8. *Temptations from Satan During This Purification.*

As faith is the foundation of the spiritual life, God permits most of His elect to be tempted against it, to purify them and to increase their merit. With most specious arguments Satan will try to undermine the certainty of their faith, to fill their minds with doubts and gloomy

forebodings, and finally will tempt them to despair. And, as but few love God for His own sake, these temptations fill most souls with great distress. When tempted against faith the soul should pray, study, make acts of faith, and say in all confidence with holy Job: "Although Thou shouldst kill me, I will trust in Thee" (*Job* xiii. 15). And if the temptation continues for a long time, the soul should seek counsel from her spiritual director.

9. *Extraordinary Trial from God During This Purification.*

At times God protracts the purgation of the intellectual faculties indefinitely by depriving them of all consolation, and by permitting them thus to continue in aridity, anxiety, and darkness. Though the soul is intimately united to God by His grace, like the Saviour on the cross, she receives no perceptible light or strength from this union. When thus tried, like gold in the furnace, St. Bernard exhorts all to practise devotion to the Passion of Our Lord and to the Sorrows of Mary, and to rest assured that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 *Cor.* x. 13).

SECTION III.

THE DIVINE INFLUENCE IN THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE — PASSIVE ILLUMINATION.

The twofold divine influence of the special dispensations of Providence and actual grace are found in every phase of the spiritual life. The special dispensations of Divine Providence provide the occasion for man's spiritual advancement, while the allurements of grace stimulate his good will by enlightening his mind, inclining his heart, and strengthening his will in utilizing the occasion to advance in self-denial, in the practice of virtue, and in union with God.

In the practice of virtue the special dispensations of Divine Providence present the opportunity for man (1) to know, love, and serve God; (2) to know and follow his vocation; (3) and to practise every virtue. At the same time grace allures man to practise virtue by the stimulus (1) of the fear of the Lord; (2) of the desire of reward; (3) of the excellence of vir-

tue; (4) of gratitude to God; (5) and of the union of contemplation.

I. THE SPECIAL DISPENSATIONS OF PROVIDENCE.

1. *The Opportunity to Know, Love, and Serve God.*

When considering the assistance which God gives man in the spiritual life we saw how He implanted in every human heart a craving for happiness which He alone can satisfy, and how He gave man an innate love of truth and virtue to guide him in the pursuit of this happiness. We also saw how, as a rule, the word and example of parents, and the guidance of the Church are the ordinary means which Providence employs in giving man the opportunity to know, love, and serve God. Besides, we saw in considering the universality of grace, that, where these means are lacking God will not hesitate to send an angel if necessary to supply this opportunity to a soul of good will. In fact we are not exaggerating the goodness, love, and mercy of God, if we maintain that, by the special dispensations of His Providence, God offers this opportunity repeatedly even to the most benighted and degraded savage. For many things are easy to God that perplex the ingenuity

of man. The point that is clear to us and that gives us confidence is that "the mercy of God is upon all flesh" (*Ecclus.* xviii. 12).

2. *The Opportunity for Man to Know and to Follow His Vocation.*

In the chapter on the permanent assistance which God gives to man we saw how God has destined every Christian for a particular state in life. This vocation may be either to the matrimonial state or to a single state. A vocation to the matrimonial state includes the vocation of a companion of opposite temperament, but of the same taste, and of the same religion. A vocation to the single state may be either to a life of virginity in the world, to the Religious state, or to the clerical state, and always includes a preference for the concrete circumstances of the life to be led.

As a rule Divine Providence makes use of the example of others, of the dictates of conscience, of the hearing of the word of God, and of the judgment of his spiritual director to give man the opportunity to know his vocation. If man then enters into the plan of God with generosity and determination, God will arrange by the dispensations of His Providence and the influence of His grace that the opportunity to follow his

vocation will present itself to man under the circumstances He has ordained.

3. *The Opportunity to Practise Every Virtue.*

As man is made conformable to his divine Model by the practice of virtue, every state in life presents ample opportunity of practising every virtue. By following his vocation and entering the state in life to which God has destined him, man finds these opportunities relatively favorable, that is, suited to his concrete nature, and enriched with grace. If, then, he maintains the generous determination to labor, to endure, and to pray for the accomplishment of God's holy will, man will have both the inclination and the strength to practise every virtue as the opportunities present themselves. Thus, with an ordinary good will, he will accomplish more by co-operating in the plan and with the grace of God, than he could reasonably hope to accomplish in preferring the opportunities which God has not destined for him.

II. THE ALLUREMENTS OF GRACE.

1. *The Fear of the Lord.*

When man considers the final tendency of his corrupt nature his innate desire of happiness causes him to pause in the gratification of his

natural inclinations, and to stand in awe and dread before the just Judge of the living and the dead. But when he learns that the Master of life and death is a Being of infinite goodness, who has loved him with an everlasting love and who desires to make him eternally happy, his awe and dread are converted into that reverence and affection which constitute the fear of the Lord. Under the stimulating influence of actual grace the fear of the Lord becomes a powerful incentive to man in doing his duty by avoiding the vices and by practising the virtues peculiar to his state in life.

2. *The Desire of Reward.*

Another powerful allurement to a life of virtue is the desire of reward. This is begotten by man's innate desire of happiness, enlightened by faith, supported by hope, and stimulated by the grace of God. It is fed by every consideration of that reward of which St. Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 *Cor.* ii. 9).

The desire of reward prompts man to be faithful in the details of his duty, to pray with recollection and devotion, to be prompt and de-

cisive in resisting temptations, and to be vigilant in detecting and avoiding the occasion of sin as well as in discovering and using the opportunities of doing good.

3. *The Excellence of Virtue.*

The thought of the excellence of virtue inclines man to its practice and gives the grace of God another means of alluring him to embrace the opportunity of growing in it. As the love of virtue is an innate guide to happiness, the Christian should esteem every act of virtue as a step towards final beatitude. For, by the gratification it affords his innate desire of happiness, the excellence of virtue becomes an occasion of joy and of merit, and a powerful incentive to fidelity and perseverance in the service of God. This gratification which man experiences in doing good is enhanced by experiencing the accomplishment of a good deed, by the approbation such a deed receives from conscience, from all lovers of righteousness, and from God Himself. The knowledge of the excellence of virtue will prompt man to scorn the flattery, and to brave the contempt of a corrupt world, and stimulate him in striving after the Christian ideal.

4. *Gratitude to God.*

A fourth means by which grace allures man in the practice of virtue is gratitude to God. In proportion as he meditates on the benefits of creation, redemption, and sanctification for mankind, and on the goodness, love, and mercy of God towards him in particular, is man constrained to say with St. Paul: "By the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 *Cor.* xv. 10). All that man is and has, with the exception of sin, is the gift of God. If God, who does not need him, had been just to man, instead of showing him mercy when he committed sin, man would be in hell instead of enjoying the blessings of God up to the present moment.

In proportion, then, as he recognizes his debt of gratitude will man be prompted not only to praise and thank God, but also to make returns to Him for favors received by serving Him with fidelity, generosity, and devotion.

5. *The Incentive of Contemplation.*

Contemplation is an intuition of divine truth by means of which man approaches God and is inflamed with love and devotion for Him. In proportion as man assimilates the teaching of faith by study, reflection, and prayer, does he

acquire a treasury of divine truths that may be used by him as so many avenues by which he may approach the Infinite Truth, Goodness, and Love, and that may be used by the Holy Ghost as so many means by which to incline man to God by His gifts, and allure him by His grace to the practice of virtue. For, as the devil in tempting man uses the sinful impressions stored up in his memory to turn him from God and to lead him into sin, so in a more perfect way the Holy Ghost uses the truths of religion, which man holds dear, to stimulate his mind and heart in the practice of virtue. It thus happens that in consequence of the recollection and devotion with which man performs his morning devotions, he experiences pious thoughts and holy sentiments during the day that strengthen him against temptation, sweeten the discharge of his duties, and prompt him to perform acts of Christian charity.

SECTION IV.

THE DIVINE INFLUENCE UNITING THE SOUL TO GOD — PASSIVE UNION.

SANCTIFYING grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost give man the power of living a supernatural life. The practice of virtue develops this life, and union with God perfects it. Union with God in the supernatural life consists in perfect conformity with God in mind, in will, and in action. In proportion to man's good will God effects this union by providing the occasions through the special dispensations of His Providence, and by drawing man on, enlightening, directing, and strengthening him, and crowning him with complete victory over self and intimate union with Him, by the allurements of His grace.

I. THE SPECIAL DISPENSATIONS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

1. *The Opportunity of Conformity of Mind.*

Man conforms his mind to the mind of God by viewing all things in a spirit of faith. The

ideas, the judgments, the maxims, and the principles of the world have nothing in common with the truths, the judgments, the maxims, or the principles of God. By faith man makes the latter his own and regards even the minutest detail of God's external works from His true, immutable, and eternal standpoint.

The opportunity of actually conforming his mind to the mind of God presents itself to a Christian as often as a conflict arises in his mind between the teaching and practice of the world and the teaching and practice of faith. The habit of conforming our minds to God's begets that Catholic instinct by which man judges intuitively of the orthodoxy of an opinion regarding faith or morals. It is likewise the foundation of the conformity of man's will and actions to the will and plan of God.

2. *The Opportunity of Conformity of Will.*

The will of God is made known to us by the voice of parents, pastors, and other lawful superiors, by the laws of God, by the laws of the Church, and by the just laws of our country. Sometimes God makes His will known to us in a special matter by the special dispensation of His Providence, by the inspiration of His grace,

and in a doubtful matter by the advice of our spiritual director.

The human will must do four things to conform to the will of God: (1) desire the good which God wills; (2) resolve on attaining the good which God wills; (3) set the other faculties in motion to attain the good which God wills; (4) and direct the faculties in the pursuit of the good which God wills, and as He makes it known by the dictates of reason enlightened by faith. Conformity to the Divine Will in these four points constitutes the essence of all sanctity. In proportion as man practises it he may confidently say with the Saviour: "My meat is to do the will of Him who sent me, that I may perfect His work" (*John* iv. 34). "For I do always the things that please Him" (*John* viii. 29).

Providence gives man the opportunity of conforming his will to the will of God, whenever worldly desires, self-will, or tepidity inclines his will to oppose the will of God.

3. *The Opportunity of Conformity in Action.*

The plan of God provides for three kinds of Christian actions: prayer, labor, and sacrifice. Prayer embraces the proper use of the means of

grace whereby man subjects himself to the divine influence and directs his actions to the glory of God and the welfare of souls. Labor consists in the pursuit of those intermediate ends, which, according to man's state in life, shall serve as stepping-stones to conduct him to his Final End. Labor is made up of mental and physical application, and of sufficient repose and innocent recreation to conserve man's normal powers while practising every virtue. Sacrifice embraces: (1) the necessary effort man must make to labor and pray according to the plan of God; (2) the renunciation and detachment from the possession and use of the things that may hinder man's spiritual progress; (3) the obligation of patiently enduring all the trials and temptations of life, which Providence positively ordains or passively tolerates man to undergo on his journey to eternity.

As prayer, labor, and sacrifice enter equally into the plan of God, perfect conformity demands that we embrace the opportunity for each in the same spirit of faith and with equal generosity and good-will, and perform them with that exactness, thoroughness, and attention to detail which the holy will of God prescribes.

Providence gives man the opportunity of conforming his actions to the plan of God by the

obligations of his state in life, and by special occasions for prayer and the practice of fraternal charity. When man embraces these opportunities eagerly and co-operates perfectly in them, he may truly say with St. Clement Hofbauer: "I will what God wills, because He wills it, when He wills it, where He wills it, and as He wills it."

II. THE ALLUREMENTS OF GRACE.

1. *The Love of Desire.*

By the love of desire man clings to God as the Author of all happiness. In proportion as he realizes that his happiness can be found only in the friendship of God, does man tend to union with Him by this desire. And in proportion as man keeps this truth before his mind, will grace spur him on to this union by making the holy will of God the rule of all his thoughts, of all his affections, and of all his actions. When contemplating God as the Author of all happiness, man desires, like St. Paul, "to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (*Philip.* i. 23), and is prepared to make any sacrifice to attain eternal fruition.

2. *The Love of Benevolence.*

The most perfect bond whereby man can be

united to God is the love of benevolence. By this love man clings to God as the Greatest Good and wishes Him infinite honor and glory. On this account the love of benevolence is called charity, or the bond of perfection.

In proportion as man divests himself of self-love and surrenders to the allurements of grace, will grace draw him on to this most intimate union with God, until he attains the full liberty of a child of God and practises perfect conformity to the holy will of God. He has then mastered the first and greatest commandment, which is "to love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (*Luke* x. 27).

3. *Infused Contemplation.*

Infused contemplation is a loving intuition of divine truth effected by God to unite a soul most intimately to himself. This supernatural effect in a soul that has completely surrendered to God, is immediately brought about by the gift of wisdom, understanding, or knowledge, or by some higher light or infused science. It takes so complete possession of the soul that it gives the mind so clear a knowledge of God's ineffable truths, and inflames the will with so sweet and heavenly a pleasure, that it draws the soul irre-

sistibly to union with God and unites her to Him in reverent admiration and joyful delight.

By infused contemplation a soul may be attracted along four stages of perfect union with God. The first stage, called the state of quiet, consists in a transient recollection and silence of mind, while the will communes with God in repentant sorrow and tender love. The second stage is called the state of full union. In this God suspends the natural actions of all the powers of the soul while infusing into her the gift of true wisdom. In the third stage, called ecstatic union, God takes so complete control of the soul's powers, and so absorbs even the senses, as to suspend for the time all communication with the exterior world. The final stage is called spiritual marriage or transforming union. It is permanent, and consists in making the soul perfectly conformable to her Divine Spouse.

III. EXTRAORDINARY FAVORS.

God gives two kinds of grace to man: one to make man pleasing in His sight, the other to aid him in bringing souls to Him. The former we have considered as divided into sanctifying and actual grace. We shall now add a few words of explanation on the latter, which is called "grace gratuitously given."

Man can become the instrument of his neighbor's conversion by enlightening his mind on the truth, and by persuading his will to embrace it. To accomplish both successfully he must possess three qualifications: the necessary knowledge, the faculty of communication, and the power of persuasion. In the natural order man can acquire these qualifications by a proper cultivation of his talents.

In the supernatural order, besides the stimulating influence of His grace accompanying their words, God always gives His agents the gifts of faith and science to perfect their knowledge, the gifts of understanding and counsel to perfect their faculty of communication, and the gift of wisdom to perfect their power of persuasion. When extraordinary circumstances require it, God perfects the knowledge of His agents by visions, inspirations, and revelations, their faculty of communication by the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation, and their power of persuasion by the gifts of the discernment of spirits, of prophecy, and of miracles.

As nearly every soul that attains a high degree of union with God is instrumental in bringing other souls to God, the saints are usually favored with one or more of these graces. Since these graces are not given to ordinary souls they

need not be explained in detail here. It may be well to remark, however, that we should avoid both extreme attitudes in regard to any extraordinary supernatural manifestation. On the one hand we must always admit their possibility, as well as the infinite goodness, love, and mercy of God. But on the other hand we must guard against superstition, the deception of the imagination through pride or self-love, and the blunders of credulity. Let us take it for granted that whatever God does He does well. He leaves no ground of reasonable doubt in the minds of those to whom He sees fit to grant extraordinary favors.

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PRINTED BY BENZIGER BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

14,502 248 G23

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The Narrow Way; A Brief, Clear, Systematical Exposition of the Spiritual Life for the Laity.

TITLE

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